

THE CON *and Other* *Urban Legends*

American Folklore
Adapted for the stage by

Bryan Starchman

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DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to my mom and dad who always made sure there were no monsters under my bed.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Here are three stories to make your skin crawl and your blood turn cold. "On Second Hand" features a young man who has a close call with death and suddenly his life is literally flashing before his eyes. "Who's Calling?" shows what can happen when a seemingly harmless practical joke is taken way too far. And in "The Con" we meet a charming couple who put their full trust in one another...for better or for worse.

(This one act is excerpted from the full-length play, *Urban Legends*.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Widely flexible cast, minimum of 13 actors)

Scene 1: On Second Hand

Jeff
Laura
Doctor Jenkins (*Flexible*)
Bradley Beattie
Father
Mother
Monique Lopez
Coach (*Flexible*)
English Teacher (*Flexible*)
Math Teacher (*Flexible*)
Girl 1, 2
Principal (*Flexible*)
Students 1, 2, and 3 (*M*)

Scene 2: Who's Calling?

Blythe Roberts
Frank Nutley
Margie Nutley
Suzanne Roberts
Justin or Justine/ Caller (*Flexible*)
Ben or Beth / Caller (*Flexible*)
Police Officer (*Flexible*)

Scene 3: The Con

Cooper
Lucy
Clerk (*Flexible*)
Frank
Guido (*M but could be played by a tough female*)
Louis (*M but could be played by a tough female*)

Scene 1: On Second Hand

(AT RISE: A young man, JEFF, stands down stage on the apron in front of the curtain. There is a slight part in the curtain but the stage is darkened behind him so that the audience can't really see what is beyond the curtain. The scene starts in blackness. SFX: The sound of a car speeding is heard, followed by a dull thud. The brakes screech for a second and then the car speeds off. SPOTLIGHT up on Jeff, screaming out at the audience.)

JEFF: *(Holding his right arm in pain.)* Hey! HEY! Where'd you learn to drive? You nearly took my arm off! *(Looking on in disbelief he jogs a couple of quick steps to the right.)* Where are you going!? HEY! I've got your license plate number, buddy! *(Squinting, he says to himself.)* RX562Q... or is that an O? RX526O...562...I need pen.

(HE starts to search his body for a pen, patting his pockets, but as soon as he lets go of his right arm the pain surges through his body. He winces and holds his arm against his chest. A young woman, LAURA, has entered. She doesn't rush towards Jeff but instead walks calmly up to him. She keeps her distance off to the left of him.)

JEFF: *(Seeing LAURA.)* Hey! Did you see that guy?

LAURA: No.

JEFF: Are you kidding me? Somebody must have seen him. *(Looking around.)* I gotta find a witness. *(HE starts to walk off stage, lets his arm fall and winces again in pain.)*

LAURA: *(SHE moves to HIM and calmly places a hand on him.)* Take a minute. You're all worked up. Tell me what happened.

JEFF: *(HE finally slows down and takes a breath.)* Yeah... yeah... My adrenaline's going. *(Deep breath.)* I was crossing the street. I just graduated from high school an hour ago and I'm meeting some of my buddies over at the Frost Shop.

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JEFF: *(Cont'd.)* I was using the cross walk and this blue car whipped around the corner. I didn't see the driver. The streetlight was bouncing off the windshield -- you know just glare where his head should've been. So I jumped out of the way and his front bumper nearly took my arm off. The guy didn't even stop!

LAURA: What time did this happen?

JEFF: Right now. Like 30 seconds ago.

LAURA: What time is it now?

JEFF: *(HE winces as he looks at his watch on his right arm.)* Eight thirty and fifteen seconds. *(Disgusted.)* Great. He busted my watch. The face is smashed to bits and it's frozen at eight thirty and fifteen seconds.

LAURA: Well, at least we have an exact moment of impact.

JEFF: *(Looking blankly at HER.)* What good is that going to do?

LAURA: It's a starting point.

JEFF: A starting point for what!? The guy just took off and I didn't even get a plate. *(Trying to remember.)* RX625...do you have a pen?

(LAURA looks at HIM blankly.)

JEFF: A pen. A Bic pen. *(Frustrated.)* A writing utensil!?

(LAURA starts to walk away.)

JEFF: Listen. I'm sorry. I'm all worked up. You're just trying to help.

LAURA: I'm just trying to help.

JEFF: Maybe I should get myself to the hospital. Get my arm checked out.

(LAURA stands off to the left of JEFF as characters start to enter from the right. First DOCTOR JENKINS enters wearing a white physician's coat.)

DOCTOR: Hello, Jeff.

JEFF: Doctor Jenkins!

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DOCTOR: I see your back straightened out.

JEFF: Yeah...yeah I'd forgotten all about that.

DOCTOR: I'm just glad we got that brace on you when you were young. I know you dealt with a lot of teasing in elementary school but now your spine is strong.

JEFF: Doc, could you take a look at my arm?

DOCTOR: Can't Jeff, I've been retired for years. You take care now.

(DOCTOR JENKINS doesn't give JEFF a second look as he enters the split in the curtain and disappears into the darkness.)

JEFF: Doc. Hey, Doc!

LAURA: Friend of yours?

JEFF: My pediatrician; made me wear a back brace when I was three. *(Still looking off in bewilderment in the direction that the doctor left.)* Worst thing ever, made my shirts all rounded out in the back, kids called me--

(BRADLEY BEATTIE has entered the stage. He is pugnacious and irritating.)

BRADLEY: Little Jeffy the Turtle. *(BRADLEY walks up and pushes JEFF.)* Let's see what happens when this turtle gets stuck on his back. *(Bradley shoves Jeff again.)*

JEFF: Brad Beattie? I thought you were in prison!

(BRAD takes an aggressive step towards JEFF but stops just short. Jeff instinctually flinches.)

BRAD: *(Punching JEFF hard in his injured arm.)* Two for flinching. *(Exits through the curtain and into the darkness.)*
See you around Turdy the Turtle.

LAURA: Nice guy.

JEFF: I haven't seen him since third grade. He got sent off to a special school. *(Beat.)* When we were fourteen he stabbed his stepfather. *(Beat.)* I hated that guy.

End of Freeview

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