THE SIEGE OF ROOM 304

By Daniel S. Kehde

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STORY OF THE PLAY

What happens when a high schooler brings a pistol to biology class? In this tense drama, Wesley, a 17-year-old boy with a handgun, holds 13 of his fellow students as voluntary hostages as he tries to come to grips with the events that brought him there. In the 24 hours that follow, the tension of the stand-off outside mixes with the casual attitude of the students inside. By the end, we see these rich characters relate their own experiences with violence, parental authority, peer pressure, high school and the pains of outgrowing childhood. Finally, too, we learn why Wesley brought the gun to school. This honest, riveting play lets us see one of today's most highly charged situations from the center of the action. One act: running time 60 minutes approx.

Note:

This play was written as an instructional piece for high school aged actors. It uses situations and language that tries to reflect the standards of that community without totally alienating the parents and teachers who are responsible for it. It is not the intention of the playwright to flaunt violations of community standards or to teach the ineffectiveness of rules of decency and conduct, but simply to afford the young actor an opportunity to play a role to which he or she can relate in a situation that, sadly, appears more and more in today's schools.

– Dan Kehde

CHARACTERS
(2 m, 12 f)
(In individual speaking order.)

All characters but one, are of high school age.

WESLEY (17, two years older than the rest)
WENDY
DULCIE (female)
BJ (female)
STEPHANIE
JENNY
SASHA (female)
TIFANIE (brighter than she acts)
LEESHA
ANNABELLE
ANDREW (10 to 14 years old, but advanced rather than precocious)
MARION (a 9th grader)
MIRANDA
WILLI (female)

SETTING

The science lab at a local high school. Long, narrow lab tables are set in rows, two per row, perpendicular to the audience, with stools facing left. The teacher's desk is down stage left, facing the students. Two doors leading to the hallway are upstage left and right (offstage); a row of windows facing over the courtyard and the street are right (also offstage). On the left (or offstage) are the entrance to a bathroom and a closet. The upstage wall can be left bare, curtained or used for blackboards, science posters etc. Against that wall, upstage left, is the location of the TV, if one is used.

COSTUMES

The cast wears typical high school clothing, differentiated for character. Wesley wears a sweater. Andrew wears glasses and dresses nerdlike. Dulcie wears a sweatshirt.

PROPS

All the kids except Wesley have backpacks and books for class. Sasha or Willi might have art supplies. On set: beakers, phone. Binoculars are off left. Wesley has a .45 automatic. Other props include pizza boxes, two-liter bottles of soda, and perhaps a paper football.

SOUND

School bell, extended school bell ended by the pop of a gunshot, phone ringing, cell phone chirping, two gunshots.

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Scene 1

(The school bell rings. Lights up as the STUDENTS enter the classroom. They are laughing and fooling around. They begin to sit when WESLEY enters carrying a gun.)

WESLEY: Okay, everybody, school's out. Lock the door. *(Cheers and laughter.)* Marion, lock the other door.

(MARION gets up and runs to the other side of the stage then returns.)

WENDY: Wesley, is that real?
WESLEY: What do you think?
WENDY: Wesley.
WESLEY: What? It's real enough.
DULCIE: Wesley.
WESLEY: *(Laughs.)* Do I really look stupid enough to bring a .45 automatic to school?
BJ: Yes
WESLEY: You're very observant, BJ.
DULCIE: Oh, God.
WENDY: Why'd you do that? God, Wesley, aren't you in enough trouble already?
WESLEY: *(Laughs.)* Yeah. I am now.
STEPHANIE: *(Towards the door.)* Look, it's Mr. Mays.

(WESLEY stands up and walks to the door, shouting as he goes.)

WESLEY: Sorry, Mr. Mays, class is definitely cancelled today. Due to lack of … teacher. Yeah, that's right. Due to lack of teacher.
JENNY: *(To MARION.)* You're such a card, Wesley.
WESLEY: *(Waving the gun offstage.)* See this, Jack? Real – <u>real</u>. Man, look at him go.

(EVERYONE laughs.)

SASHA: So, Wesley, are we hostages?
WESLEY: I don't know. Are you?
TIFANIE: Well, okay. I mean, I guess, you know. I have practice at 3:30. Are we going to be any later than that?
DULCIE: Tifanie …
TIFANIE: Well, you know.
WENDY: You're not planning to kill yourself or anything, are you?
WESLEY: I might … No. Why would I want to do that? Do you want to stay with me?
JENNY: Are you asking us if we want to be hostages?
LEESHA: Cool.
BJ: Leesha.
LEESHA: What? I have geometry test next period. I'm in. What about you, BJ?
BJ: I don't know; Jason's supposed to meet me at my locker.
LEESHA, SASHA and ANNABELLE: Ooooooooo, Jason.
BJ: I like him. *(Pause.)* But not that much. I'm staying.
WESLEY: *(To WENDY.)* You haven't answered my question.
WENDY: Do you want me to? *(HE looks over the CROWD.)* Not like that. Do you want me to?
WESLEY: Yeah.
WENDY: Okay.
ANDREW: *(By the window.)* Well, that didn't take long.
DULCIE: What?
ANDREW: Police cars just pulled up. I always knew Mr. Mays was a wimp. *(To WESLEY.)* Do you know how much trouble you're in?
WESLEY: Oh yeah. I got a pretty good idea.
ANDREW: Do you mind if I stay?
WESLEY: Why would you want to? Andrew, you're the youngest kid ever to go to high school in the state. Why do you want mess around with this?
ANDREW: Do you want me to leave?

End of Freeview

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