

# 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!

**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.

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