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Dramatic Publishing




A TYPICALLY ATYPICAL DAY

A One-Act Play
By
RICHARD NORQUIST




THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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From the moment the curtain rises on a mysterious intruder who is planting false incriminating papers in the mayor's office, the excitement, tension and laughter build in this comedy which is anything but typical! A reluctant society reporter has been assigned to do a story on a "typical" day in the mayor's office. Then visitors appear. A guru and his pregnant wife want the mayor to help them register in the city hospital that refused to accept their pet snake. A fraudulent faith healer seeks exemption from paying rental fees for the revival. Then the door flies open and Carlos and Juan appear. These two bungling, homesick aliens take the entire office hostage. Before long, radio, television, the FBI and the U.N. are in on the action. All add to the confusion and, finally, to the happy ending!



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RICHARD NORQUIST**



The Dramatic Publishing Company
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(A TYPICALLY ATYPICAL DAY)

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A TYPICALLY ATYPICAL DAY

A Comedy in One Act
For Five Men and Eight Women

CHARACTERS

STRANGER sinister figure
MRS. PAGONI cleaning woman
MISS JOYCE secretary to the mayor
MISS LASHURE society page columnist
DIXIE DUGAN cub reporter
SARAH TWINKLE owner of a health club
EGOT PASHA religious sect member
IANA PASHA religious sect member
BROTHER BILLY evangelist
CHASTITY Brother Billy's assistant
VIRTUE Brother Billy's assistant
CARLOS an atypical terrorist
JUAN Carlos' cousin

and

Pizza Man

PLACE: The office of the mayor in a typical city.

TIME: Before the beginning of a typical work day.

A TYPICALLY ATYPICAL DAY

SCENE: *The outer office of the mayor of a Midwestern city. There is a large window that overlooks the city R, one door UR which leads to a closet and another DL, which goes into the mayor's inner office. The furniture consists of a sofa with coffee table and a matching chair RC, two chairs URC and two chairs ULC with an outer door to the hallway between them UC. There is a desk and chair with another chair at the side of the desk LC and a filing cabinet L. Near the center of the room is a cart containing a wastebasket and the tools and cleaning equipment belonging to the cleaning woman. A vacuum cleaner and an empty wastepaper basket are nearby. On the desk are a small radio and telephone in addition to other desk properties.*

AT RISE: *The stage is dimly lit and curtains closed. The outer door UC opens and a sinister FIGURE appears, carrying a briefcase and flashlight. He shines flashlight around room, steals across to the filing cabinet, finds it locked and locates a key under the telephone. After opening the cabinet, he pulls out a file, removes the contents, tears the sheets into small pieces and puts them in the wastepaper basket. From his briefcase, he pulls out several sheets and inserts them into the folder and replaces the folder in the file. He has now planted the damaging evidence and is quite satisfied with himself. He then hears keys rattling in the lock of the outer door. He panics and steps backwards into the vacuum cleaner and accidentally*

turns it on. More confused, he stumbles backwards and pushes the button of the radio which plays loud music. Moving away from the desk, he puts one foot in the wastepaper basket and can't get it out. Quickly he picks up his briefcase and, with basket still on his foot, hides in the closet UR.

The door UC opens and MRS. PAGONI, the cleaning woman, enters. Her hair is in curlers, stockings rolled down, a sweater wrapped around her waist. She carries a dust mop and a portable radio and wears large headphones. While moving in time to the silent music of her radio, she turns on the lights, opens the curtains, then notices that a wastepaper basket is missing. She takes another from the cart and puts it near the desk.

MISS JOYCE, the mayor's secretary, enters with the morning mail. She is aghast at the loud noise, which MRS. PAGONI does not seem to hear. MISS JOYCE turns off the radio and vacuum cleaner, then speaks.

MISS JOYCE. Good morning, Mrs. Pagoni. *(Realizing that MRS. PAGONI cannot hear, she unplugs the headset.)*
Good morning, Mrs. Pagoni.

MRS. PAGONI *(forced to turn down her radio to answer).*
Good morning, good morning.

MISS JOYCE. Lovely day.

MRS. PAGONI. Ah, lovely day, lovely day. *(She heads for exit UC with all her equipment.)*

MISS JOYCE. Have a pleasant day, Mrs. Pagoni. *(MRS. PAGONI waves back and exits. MISS JOYCE turns on the radio for the early morning news. She removes her coat and hangs it in the closet, then reappears. While listening*

to the newscast, she pages through the morning mail, but reacts quite strongly to what she hears.)

FEMALE RADIO VOICE. And that's about it for KKDR's Sunrise Aerobic Dance Class this morning. This is Cindy Johnson for KKDR, saying bye now and remember, girls, keep that beat. *(Music fades out.)*

MALE RADIO VOICE. And now for the local early morning news, Robert Putnam reporting. The mayor's office makes news again today. *(MISS JOYCE turns up radio.)* Local politics takes an interesting turn today as Rustin P. Wilson, a local businessman, is expected to file for the office of mayor. He will run against the incumbent, Mayor Hiram Peterson. Mr. Wilson said he would be running on a reform ticket to bring back honesty and integrity to local government. If Mr. Wilson is to run for mayor, he must file by four this afternoon, which is the deadline. Also, at that time, he said he would make an official statement revealing the location of his proof of corruption in the mayor's office. KKDR will keep you informed of any later developments. The local Meat Cutters' Union 3454 has sliced its demands and is expected to beef up its own retirement system. A new package will be presented to the Crestwell management sometime later today. *(Telephone rings, and MISS JOYCE turns off radio.)*

MISS JOYCE. Good morning, Mayor Peterson's office. Oh, good morning, Mayor. Oh, that's too bad...well, you know there has been a lot of talk of how important fiber is to your diet...Wait, I'll check. *(Looks at calendar.)* Nothing really important. Billingsly from City Streets would like to talk to you about his potholes... and you were to have a surprise inspection at the sewage disposal plant this afternoon, but I can call them and postpone it till tomorrow... Oh, you and Bob were to get together sometime soon

about setting up plans for the campaign. Fine. One other thing—I just heard on the radio that Wildman Wilson is going to file for mayor this afternoon. It looks as if you will have some competition. But how that crook can run on a reform ticket is beyond me. He's the kind of nut that would break into your office and actually plant incriminating evidence...oh, well...I'll expect to see you when I see you. Remember, Mayor—more fiber. Bye now.

(MISS LASHURE enters the office UC. Following her is DIXIE DUGAN, her assistant. DIXIE is lugging a camera, briefcase, and a shoulder purse. She also holds a notepad and a box of Kleenex for MISS LASHURE.)

MISS LASHURE *(sneezing)*. And Dixie, when you get a lead, you must follow it up to its final conclusion. Leave no stone unturned. In my exposé on Bandeano's Italian Cafe last year, it took me weeks to find out that Bandeano's were using VanCamps sauce instead of their own. *(Crosses to MISS JOYCE.)* Hello, dearie. I would like to see the mayor. I am Cynthia Leslie LaShure, columnist for the *Sentinel*. *(Dismisses MISS JOYCE and turns again to DIXIE.)* And for photos, always remember composition and make certain your picture makes a statement. A person picking his teeth is not exactly glamour, but it does show the seedy side of humanity.

MISS JOYCE *(interrupting)*. I'm sorry, ma'am, but the mayor is not in.

MISS LASHURE *(trying to impress)*. Miss Cynthia Leslie LaShure, columnist for the *Sentinel*.

MISS JOYCE. I'm sorry, Miss LaShure, but I don't know when I can expect Mayor Peterson in the office today.

MISS LASHURE. Dearie, I've been assigned to do a story on the mayor's office, in conjunction with his coming campaign. This is supposed to be a story of a typical day in this office. I am to write about the human drama as it unfolds: the conflicts, compassion, and the confrontations as they pass through those doors. Now, how can I write this story if the mayor is not present?

MISS JOYCE (*sweetly*). You got me, dearie.

MISS LASHURE (*sneezing*). I did not ask to do this story. Politics is not my forte. But through the infinite wisdom of the city desk, they must have decided that I, alone, could find some germ that could be nurtured into a passable story of some interest value. We shall wait, dearie, (*Sneezes.*) and if there is no story, then that is what I shall report—that this lackluster office and its lackluster occupants deserve no coverage, for nothing of consequence ever happens here.

MISS JOYCE. As you wish, Miss LaShure. Won't you have a seat. (*Walks to filing cabinet. MISS LASHURE crosses to the sofa, but before she reaches it she must sneeze again. Frantically she realizes that she is out of tissues and, therefore, sticks her nose directly into the empty box and sneezes.*)

MISS LASHURE. This is ridiculous. Why don't they put more tissues in a box? They always run out just when you need them.

DIXIE (*to MISS JOYCE*). Ma'am, I wonder if you have any Kleenex? (*Gestures to MISS LASHURE.*)

MISS JOYCE (*at filing cabinet*). Certainly—top right drawer of my desk.

DIXIE. Thanks. (*Crosses to desk and gets new box of Kleenex. But before she returns, MISS LASHURE stops her.*)

MISS LASHURE (*holding up empty aspirin bottle*). And an aspirin, dearie, ma'am? You wouldn't have any aspirins? This cold is killing me.

MISS JOYCE (*smiling*). Same drawer.

MISS LASHURE. Four. (*DIXIE delivers the pills and Kleenex to MISS LASHURE.*) I don't suppose...

MISS JOYCE. Water fountain is just outside the door. (*MISS LASHURE exits UC with her pills.*)

DIXIE. You'll have to excuse Miss LaShure; she's really not herself. That cold has a way of souring a normally lousy disposition.

MISS JOYCE. I take it that you are new with the *Sentinel*.

DIXIE. Started yesterday, in fact. This is my first real assignment. Well, I mean I'm helping on the assignment. I imagine, when I go on my own, I'll be assigned flower shows for a year or two. Graduated from Weberg College, up-state.

(*MISS LASHURE enters UC.*)

MISS LASHURE. Well, I certainly hope those aspirins work. I really feel mis...(*She freezes in the middle of the word, head cocked to one side, a dizzy smile on her face, staring into space.*)

DIXIE. Miss LaShure...something the matter? Miss LaShure, are you all right? (*In a half-intoxicated state, MISS LASHURE begins to giggle; yawns, and hiccups.*)

MISS LASURE (*hiccupping*). No more sneezing! (*Giggles and hiccups.*)

MISS JOYCE (*crossing to MISS LASURE*). What's the matter, Miss LaShure? Are you sick?

MISS LASURE. I feel great! At least I think I do. But I am dizzy. Everything is fuzzy and I...I tingle. I'm...I'm

(Yawning.) tired. (She yawns again, then stiffens out and falls back, directly into the arms of MISS JOYCE.)

MISS JOYCE. Help me get her to the chair. (DIXIE picks up MISS LASURE's feet and she and MISS JOYCE carry her to the chair next to the desk.)

DIXIE. What happened? (MISS LASURE begins to snore.) Boy, is she spaced out.

MISS JOYCE. She seems as if she were drugged. Those pink pills you gave her were only...

DIXIE (correcting her). Those white pills...

BOTH (nodding together). ...should have been pink pills.

DIXIE. What were they?

MISS JOYCE. Just some weak tranquilizers.

DIXIE. She acted as if she were almost drunk. She is really out. (MISS LASURE continues to snore, giggle, and hiccup.)

MISS JOYCE. She may have had a reaction with some other medicine. Check her purse. (DIXIE brings purse from sofa to desk, finds a bottle and reads the label. She then places the purse on the floor downstage of the desk and pre-sets the rubber snake, which is attached to the purse, in such a manner that the audience does not see it. This bit of business will be necessary to set up sight gag at end of play.)

DIXIE. Here they are—"Reynolds Cold-Away Capsules." What should we do? Should I call the hospital?

MISS JOYCE (having checked her pulse and forehead). I don't think that will be necessary. I'd say let her sleep it off. Pulse is normal, breathing regular, except for the snoring. And look at that smile on her face. It would be a shame to wake her now. Help me move her into the mayor's office. She can sleep it off on his couch.

DIXIE (as they carry her off DL). Boy, I'd love to have a picture of this.

BOTH (*offstage*). One, two, three—up.

(*DIXIE and MISS JOYCE enter again DL*)

MISS JOYCE (*sitting at her desk*). Well, Dixie, I guess the big story is all yours.

DIXIE. Great! But what big story, ma'am?

MISS JOYCE. Please call me Maddy. You know, we may be together for some time if Sleeping Beauty doesn't find her Prince Charming.

DIXIE (*taking out pad and pencil for some serious work*). Maddy, how long have you been working for Mayor Peterson?

MISS JOYCE. Hold it. You are not going to interview me, are you? (*Crosses to cabinet.*)

DIXIE (*following her*). Well, I thought I would. You know, this could be my big break. (*Serious again.*) Do you have any humorous or interesting anecdotes that you could relate...?

MISS JOYCE. Dixie, I think Miss LaShure was right. There really isn't a lot of excitement around here, no big human interest story—maybe a disgruntled taxpayer once in a while, but no big story. Really, it's the way we like it. Maybe if you tried the police station or the fire...

(*BOTH look up as EGOT and his wife, IANA enter UC. They are dressed in similar flowing garments. EGOT wears a wild wig and carries a woven basket. IANA carries a suitcase. As EGOT enters, he waves his arms in the air and shouts a loud chant to the heavens.*)

DIXIE. I think you have company! (*She crosses behind them and sits upstage.*)

EGOT (*to DIXIE*). May the blessing of Pasha be with you, my child. (*Crossing to MISS JOYCE*.) And to you and your children.

MISS JOYCE. I have no children.

EGOT. Then may the blessing of Pasha make you more fertile.

MISS JOYCE. I'm not married.

EGOT (*blessing room in general*). Then may the path of Pasha be eternally lit for you. May the...(*IANA comes up behind EGOT and moves him aside. She is quite irritated and unimpressed.*)

IANA. Knock it off, Frank.

EGOT. It is the destiny, as decreed by Pasha and written in the Bacoba, that our humble paths should lead to the mayor's office and through his wisdom and compassion—

IANA. Just get to the point, Frank, it ain't like I got all day, Frank.

EGOT. It is written by Pasha that his disciples should share destiny with a mate. This is my life-mate, Iana Pasha, I am Egot Pasha, and these (*Holding up a flower.*) are the tears of Pasha.

MISS JOYCE. She just called you Frank.

EGOT. A tainted mortal name, which was to be discarded with our worldly possessions when Pasha took us to his bosom.

IANA (*pushing EGOT aside and sitting on chair near desk*). Lady, I'm pregnant.

MISS JOYCE. Yes, I noticed.

IANA. And the baby is coming soon; like—very soon.

MISS JOYCE (*beginning to understand*). Oh.

IANA. Ma'am, I want my baby born in a hospital and not in some crummy petunia patch. But they won't admit me into the hospital.

MISS JOYCE. I'm certain you don't mean City General.

They are required to admit everyone, regardless of race, color, creed, ability to pay...or religion.

IANA. Well, they won't admit us. You see we...he...has a bit of a problem. He insists that Pasha be present in the delivery room.

MISS JOYCE. There should be no real problem, I'm sure. Husbands are often in attendance at the time of delivery. I'm certain that Mr. Pasha—

IANA. It's not that Pasha.

MISS JOYCE. You mean the flower?

IANA. No, it's the other one. Frank, show her your friend. *(EGOT removes a snake from the basket, shows it to MISS JOYCE and returns it to basket.)*

MISS JOYCE. A snake!

EGOT. This is Pasha. Not having Pasha present when my child—

IANA. Our child, Frank.

EGOT. ...when our child is born would be unthinkable.

MISS JOYCE. Your...your snake is named Pasha, too?

IANA. Everything is named Pasha. We eat Pasha, we sing Pasha, we pray Pasha. *(Really irritated.)* When I have to go to the bathroom, I go Pasha. Frank insists that the snake be present during the time of delivery. He says it will insure a happy Pasha for the child all throughout his life. So, now can we see the mayor? City General does belong to the city, does it not?

MISS JOYCE. Yes, it does, but you are not able to see the mayor. He's not here. And I really have no idea when he'll be in today, if he does come in. But you are welcome to wait if you would like.

IANA *(holding stomach)*. Not too long I hope. *(She crosses to sofa while EGOT begins to move to DIXIE.)* This way,

Frank. (*While EGOT is preparing himself, the telephone rings and MISS JOYCE answers. EGOT takes out a rug and places it on the floor near to IANA, on the sofa. He then takes out a small incense burner and begins to light it.*)

MISS JOYCE. Mayor Peterson's office...Good morning. I'm sorry, I don't know when to expect him in...may I take a message...thank you.

IANA. Oh, for gosh sakes, Frank, you know that incense makes me nauseous. Put it away, Frank.

EGOT. But the spirit of Pasha lives—

IANA. Stuff it, Frank. (*EGOT puts lamp away and pulls out a small recorder and begins to play.*) No, Frank. (*EGOT then raises his arms, does a few incantations, closes his eyes and goes into a trance.*) Much better, Frank.

DIXIE (*crossing to IANA*). Hi, I'm a reporter for the Sentinel, and I couldn't help overhearing your conversation with Miss Joyce. I was wondering if you would give me a few moments—I'd like to ask you a few questions.

IANA (*holding stomach*). Time is one thing I don't have much of, but go ahead. Let's move over there, I don't want to wake up Frank. (*BOTH move to chairs URC.*)

(*SARAH TWINKLE enters. She is wearing heavy makeup and a revealing dress.*)

SARAH TWINKLE. Hi, honey, is Hiram in?

MISS JOYCE. I'm sorry, but I don't know when the mayor will be in. Could I help you?

SARAH TWINKLE. Damn. No, I don't think you can help. Well, it's about...a...a...

MISS JOYCE. Something personal?