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**Developed at the Indiana Repertory Theatre
A Bonderman National Playwriting Award winner**

Can't Believe It

Comic drama by R.N. Sandberg



Can't Believe It

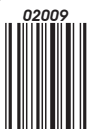
Comic drama. By R.N. Sandberg. Cast: 2 to 4m., 4 to 8w., extras if desired. *Can't Believe It* traces the intertwined paths of Teresa, a malleable, confused high-school freshman, and Ron, a confidant, popular high-school junior who is about to nail down a college soccer scholarship. Teresa thinks Ron may be the perfect guy—good-looking, smart, funny—with the perfect life. How can a shy kid like her even talk to him? She is urged by her friend Callie to go after Ron and all the things she wants. That means being sexually forward, shoplifting for kicks, going wild at parties and never telling her parents the truth. Teresa and Ron do connect. But when each gets caught doing something they shouldn't, they have to think about what they believe—about themselves, each other and what they truly want. Questions of honesty, trust and personal responsibility run through the lives of all the characters, adult and teen, in this comic drama drawn from the real lives of students, teachers and parents. *Can't Believe It* was developed at the Indiana Repertory Theatre as a winner of a Bonderman National Playwriting Award. *Area staging. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: CF2.*

Photos: Laguna Playhouse, Laguna Beach, Calif., featuring (top left) Jackie Melbon, Jim Harris and Jordan Sandfer, (top right) Jackie Melbon and Marissa Lowry, (bottom left) Sophia Tupy and Marissa Lowry, (bottom right) Jim Harris and Jordan Sandfer.
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CAN'T BELIEVE IT

By
R.N. SANDBERG



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Can't Believe It was developed at the Indiana Repertory Theatre, Indianapolis, as a winner of a Bonderman National Playwriting award. The staged reading in April 2005 included the following artists:

TERESA. Anne E. Thompson
RON. Nicholas Abeel
CALLIE. Grace Morgan
RAZ Cody Nicoletti
KATHRYN. Rachel Konchinsky-Pate
ARTHUR / SALESMAN Robert Neal
MS. MILLER / MADELEINE Beverly Roche
MRS. GOLDING / ANNA Constance May

Director Adam Burke
Dramaturge Sarah Gubbins
Assistant Dramaturge Talleri McRae
Team Assistant Mary Hynes
Stage Manager Joshua Friedman

Can't Believe It was further developed with The Open Eye Theater, Margaretville, N.Y., in their Bear Bones Series, January 2007. The workshop production included the following artists:

TERESA. Jodi Mathis/Alisa Fersch
RON. Dan Devita
CALLIE. Crystal Kelly
RAZ. Shane Delameter
MR. MILLER. Thomas Hafner
KATHRYN Ann Sylvester/Aja Jenkins

MRS. GOLDING Monica Wildermuth
MADELEINE Leslie Roselli
ARTHUR / SALESMAN David J. Turan
ANNA Laura Battelani

Director/Producing Artistic Director Amie Brockway
Set and Lighting David J. Turan
Costumes Elizabeth Sherr
Stage Manager Monica Wildermuth
Assistant Stage Manager Aja Jenkins
Assistants to Set Designer . Allison Comer, Jennifer Snyder
Production Assistants Greg Montminy, Emily Heverin

CAN'T BELIEVE IT

CHARACTERS *

TERESA – freshman **

RON – junior

CALLIE – freshman

RAZ – junior

MS. MILLER – drama teacher

KATHRYN – junior

MRS. GOLDING – Ron, Teresa and Kathryn's history
teacher

MADELEINE – Ron's mom

ARTHUR – Ron's dad

ANNA – Teresa's mom

SALESMAN

EXTRAS can be added as desired.

Possible Doubling for 2m. and 4w.

TERESA

RON

CALLIE / KATHRYN

RAZ / ARTHUR / SALESMAN

MS. MILLER / MADELEINE

MRS. GOLDING / ANNA

* None of the characters are written to be of a specific racial or ethnic background. At one reading, Teresa and Anna / Mrs. Golding were read by African-American actors. At another, all the actors were Caucasian. Both castings worked well as could a variety of other choices.

** In many states, 14 is the age at which kids can be hired to do retail sales, clerical and other work. By freshman year, most students are 14 and thus able to get a job.

CAN'T BELIEVE IT

SCHOOL. THURSDAY MORNING.

(TERESA enters. She looks around. She looks at the audience and stands uncomfortably for a moment.)

TERESA. I'm, uh, gonna hang out here for a little, okay? I'm kinda waitin' for someone. *(She waits.)* I've got this period free. So does the person I'm waitin' for. His name's Ron. He's a junior.

(RON, a charming, good-looking high school student, enters through the audience. TERESA watches as he talks to the audience.)

RON. Hey, how's it goin'? Nice shirt, man. Where'd you get that?

TERESA. He's really popular. But he's not one of those, ya know, jerks.

RON *(to others in the audience)*. How you doin'? You wanna stick of gum? *(He gives a piece to someone.)*

TERESA. He doesn't really know who I am. I'm only a freshman.

RON. How 'bout you? *(Gives out another stick.)*

TERESA. I'm in his history class.

RON. Last one's for me.

TERESA. I know that's weird. Freshman, junior. I changed schools. I'm takin' two histories. It's stupid. I like history.

RON. I am feelin' so good! College coach called this morning. Assistant was at the game yesterday, head man's comin' to see me next week. I can feel that scholarship.

TERESA. He's amazing.

RON. I'm gonna rock the PSATs, kick the history test next week, dazzle the coach at the game, then party like crazy at homecoming. Life will be good. Now, got a little business to take care of. *(He begins writing.)*

TERESA. I haven't really talked to him. I'd like to talk to him. I think today's gonna be the day.

(CALLIE enters to her.)

CALLIE. There he is, huh? *(She ogles him.)* Hi, Ron.

RON. Ladies. *(They swoon and giggle. RON checks them out as he continues to work. To the audience:)* Sweet, but clueless. Still, ya gotta show women respect, right? That's the only way. Respect people and that's what you get back.

CALLIE. He is so much cuter than Mark. I don't get why Deb's all over Mark. She's got no taste. That top she has on today, makes her look like an elephant.

TERESA. Don't you have to get to class?

CALLIE. He's looking at us. He is so hot.

TERESA. Callie.

CALLIE. What?

TERESA. Jay?

CALLIE. So?

TERESA. He's your boyfriend and sweet.

CALLIE. Hey, he's eyein' you. Look at him over your shoulder and smile.

TERESA (*to the audience*). I couldn't.

CALLIE. Come on, he's probably dyin' to—

TERESA. No. (*To the audience.*) I mean, should I?

CALLIE. Just do it.

TERESA. I can't. (*To the audience.*) It's just not the kinda thing I do.

CALLIE. You're such a baby. (*She looks back over her shoulder and smiles seductively at RON.*) Oh Ron.

TERESA. Callie!

RON (*to the audience*). Don't know what they see in me. But whatever it is, thank you.

TERESA. Come on, you need to go.

CALLIE. Bye bye, Ron.

RON. Hold on, I'm just finishin' up here. (*TERESA pulls CALLIE off.*) I gotta find out their names.

(*RAZ enters.*)

RAZ. Yo, Ron, how's it goin'?

RON. Wassup, Raz.

RAZ. It's bad, man.

RON. Yeah?

RAZ. Math.

RON. What?

RAZ. The homework sucked.

RON. You for real?

RAZ. What, you did it?

RON. The boy is always covered, you know that.

RAZ. Lemme see.

RON. It's only five problems. You don't need me.

RAZ. Don't play with me. Lemme have it.

RON. And whata I get?

RAZ. Come on, Ron.

RON. Am I the one askin'?

RAZ. Are we friends?

RON. Do I get hungry every time I walk by the cafeteria?

RAZ. All right, all right.

RON. And I don't mean a bottle of water. Fries and a burger is what I'm talking about.

RAZ. Just give me the paper. I don't got much time.

RON. I'm just playin'. Make sure you change something.

RAZ. Yeah, yeah. (*Exits.*)

RON. You're lucky you got me, man. Cheaper than a web site and always here for you. Raz, he's a funny kid. Goes crazy on the weekends. You should see him goofin' at parties. Then he gets here and he's all like "I gotta do my homework! I gotta do my homework!" Cracks me up... Ya know, that one girl before, she was cute. I know her.

(*MS. MILLER enters.*)

RON. Oh, hey, here's the teacher I need to see. Ms. M, how's it goin'? I was just comin' lookin' for you.

MS. MILLER. Were you?

RON. I'm thinking about auditioning for the play. You did an amazing job with the musical.

MS. MILLER. Thank you.

RON. I would have auditioned for that, but with soccer and stuff, ya know. Anyway, I was thinking the play'd be a fun way to get my arts credit and I was wonderin' if you

had any pointers for me for the audition and all. Ya know, I did a lot of acting in middle school and—

MS. MILLER. Just show up, Ron. You don't have to prepare anything. *(She exits.)*

RON. Hey, thanks. That really puts me at ease... She hates me. Doesn't even know me and she hates me. That sucks. I need the arts service credit for honor society. I need honor society for a scholarship. What am I supposed to do?

(KATHRYN enters. She comes up to RON and holds out her hand. They're both flirtatious.)

KATHRYN. All right, time's up.

RON. Lovely lady.

KATHRYN. C'mon, Ron.

RON. What, I don't think you're lovely?

KATHRYN. Hand it over.

RON. If you're gonna be like that, you didn't have to give it to me in the first place.

KATHRYN. Maybe next time I won't.

RON. I didn't ask for it.

KATHRYN. You're always askin' for it.

RON. You wound me.

KATHRYN. Just what I was hoping for.

(TERESA enters.)

TERESA. Oh, he's with Kathryn. They've been goin' out for—I don't know how long. Like more than a month.

RON. You're so good to me.

KATHRYN. You're so full of it.

RON. And that's why you love me.

TERESA. I probably shouldn't be here.

KATHRYN (*with an affectionate laugh*). You never quit, do you?

RON. How can I? When you're so— (*He moves in to kiss her.*)

TERESA. Oh.

KATHRYN. Come on, not now.

RON. Incredibly—

KATHRYN. You know I don't like—

RON. Beautiful. (*He kisses her.*)

TERESA. Oh my.

KATHRYN. Not in school.

RON. I'm ordering my tux after practice. You get your dress?

KATHRYN. This weekend with my sister in the city.

RON. Homecoming is gonna be so sweet. (*He goes to kiss her again.*)

KATHRYN (*stopping him*) Can I have my math? (*He hands her a paper.*) Thank you. (*She starts to go.*)

RON. Hey. There's an easier way to do number four.

KATHRYN. Oh yeah?

RON. Two sets of equations.

KATHRYN. Huh. You're right. That's why I love you. (*She blows him a kiss and exits.*)

TERESA. They are really good together, aren't they? So smart and funny. Especially him. (*RON is staring at her.*) Oh. I—I'm sorry. (*TERESA turns to leave.*)

RON. All right, be that way.

TERESA. Excuse me?

RON. Just walk away.

TERESA. I won't say anything.

RON. What are you talking about?

TERESA. What are you talking about?

RON. You don't know?

TERESA. You're confusing me.

RON. Is that hard to do? No, hey, look, I'm just playin' with you. Don't sweat it, okay? We're cool, right?

TERESA. She's really pretty.

RON. She is. But then, there are lots of fine-looking girls around.

TERESA. No.

RON. Every which way I turn. I'm Ron. You're...?

TERESA. Teresa—Teri.

RON. I knew that.

TERESA. I'm in your history class.

RON. That's it. Wait, you're the freshman, aren't you?

TERESA. I'm taking two histories. I know it's stupid. But I—

RON. Hey, it's okay. Ambition's a good thing.

(MRS. GOLDING enters.)

MRS. GOLDING. Ronald, may I speak with you?

RON *(to TERESA)*. I'll catch you later, okay?

TERESA. Okay.

RON. And in case you don't know, I like smart girls.

TERESA *(to the audience)*. Wow. He's not like other guys, is he? If only there weren't Kathryn. But I talked to him, right? And I can talk to him again. *(She looks at the audience over her shoulder a la CALLIE.)* Bye, Ron. *(She exits, smiling.)*

RON. Wassup, Mrs. G?

MRS. GOLDING. I happened to be going through the research papers and for some strange reason, I couldn't find yours.

RON. Whata you talking about?

MRS. GOLDING. I was wondering if by any chance it's in your locker.

RON. Why would it be there?

MRS. GOLDING. I don't know, Ronald, but it wasn't in with the others.

RON. Did it fall off your desk or something?

MRS. GOLDING. No.

RON. You don't think—I mean, you couldn't have lost it, could you? 'Cause I mean last year—

MRS. GOLDING. Now, Ronald—just print me out another copy, all right?

RON. What?

MRS. GOLDING. Another copy. And don't worry, I'm sure you meant to turn it in, so there won't be any penalty for my getting it late. It's not that big a deal.

RON. Yes, it is, Mrs. Golding. I don't have a copy of the paper. I wrote it at my father's office. After I printed it, I tried e-mailin' it to myself—but the computer crashed. I lost the whole thing. The copy you have is the only one. So this is a very big deal.

MRS. GOLDING. I'll go through things one more time. But I suggest you try to find the copy you thought you handed in. (*She goes.*)

RON. Can you believe that? Last year my buddy Tom had her. Twice, twice she lost things of his. One was some stupid homework, but the other was a major paper. And she lost it. Tom's mother took Golding apart. I mean, a teacher losin' a student's work? How bad is that? After

Tom's mom finished with her, Golding never brought it up again. Now I gotta deal with this. (*RON exits.*)

(*On a different part of the stage, TERESA enters as the scene shifts.*)

THE MALL. FRIDAY AFTER SCHOOL.

(*TERESA's excited, maybe even a little giggly.*)

TERESA. I work here at the mall. It's not such a great job, but today's a really good day, ya know? Lately Callie's started comin' by, like on my breaks or afterwards? She wants to have some fun. So we like—do stuff. (*Holds up a tube of lipstick.*)

CALLIE. That was so cool.

TERESA (*laughing*). I really don't like doin' this.

CALLIE. Lemme see.

TERESA. No, we gotta get further away.

CALLIE. Come on, they wouldn't notice if you snatched the panties off their butt.

TERESA. Keep walking.

CALLIE. What color'd you get.

TERESA. Just walk. (*CALLIE grabs the lipstick.*) Callie!

CALLIE. Oh yeah, Blazin' Berry. That is hot.

TERESA. Don't put it on now.

CALLIE. I love this stuff.

TERESA. Lemme try it.

CALLIE. I'm blazin' now. (*She tosses the lipstick to TERESA and starts rooting through her bag.*)

TERESA. It's really dark. You think it'll look okay on me?

CALLIE. Hey, check this out.

TERESA. What? It's your ID.

CALLIE. Yeah, and I was born in—

TERESA. Oh my.

CALLIE. Gonna be clubbin' tonight.

TERESA. How'd you—

CALLIE. That long-haired guy who hangs by the square.

I'll hook you up with him. Fifty bucks and you can be eighteen too. Next time, you'll be able to come.

TERESA. I thought you were goin' to Mike's party.

CALLIE. Hold on a minute. *(She's on her cell.)* Lemme talk to Mom. Shut up and just get her. *(To TERESA.)*

You're so lucky you don't have all this crap at home.

Hi, it's me. Yeah, I'm with Teri up town. She wants me to stay over, tonight.

TERESA. Callie, no—

CALLIE. Mom, I told you. Don't get so—All right, all right. I'll do it tomorrow. I will. I do so. I don't know.

Hang out, rent a movie, something.

TERESA. Callie—

CALLIE. Yeah, okay. Bye.

TERESA. What if she calls.

CALLIE. She won't. She loves you.

TERESA. But if she does, and my parents answer—

CALLIE. Don't let 'em.

TERESA. I'm not you.

CALLIE. Go out then. There's Mike's crazy big party, right?

TERESA. Do you know what it's like telling my mom I'm goin' to a party?

CALLIE. Tell her you're goin' to a movie with me, then you can go and nobody can check on either of us.

TERESA. Oh right.

CALLIE. I don't know why you're such a baby. I'm the one with the hellish family. Do you know my stupid father was on me again about the tattoo? I haven't even gotten it and it's like he's obsessed. Over a flower on my ankle. So now I'm thinkin' of getting something that'll really kill him. A big snake with like "Take me, I'm hot"—right here.

TERESA. Oh my!

CALLIE. Jeez, that color makes you look all sick. Rub a little on your cheeks. Here I'll do it. Get you ready for the party and more. Yeah, that's better. Now you're blazin'. Call tomorrow, okay, babe? And don't do anything I wouldn't do. *(She goes.)*

TERESA. She doesn't care what anyone thinks. She just—goes for it. I wish I could be like that. *(TERESA stares at the lipstick in her hand.)* Get a blazin' bright tattoo anywhere. And not care. Not care so much about everything. Here, I don't want this. *(She gives the lipstick to someone in the audience.)*