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*Dramatic Publishing*

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# **THE BULLY SHOW!**



**DRAMA/COMEDY BY**

**BRIAN GUEHRING**

# THE BULLY SHOW!

**Drama/Comedy (an interactive play for young audiences).** By **Brian Guehring.** *Cast: 2m., 1w. or 1m., 2w. (2 to 5 more actors may be used).* *The Bully Show!* opens with the audience arriving at the live taping of the pilot episode of a new game show. Carole and Frederico, the game show assistants, warm up the crowd and get them excited to see the show. However, Johnny, the game show host, has made some last-minute changes to the show (to the surprise of the assistants) and the game show is now called “You Wanna Be a Bully!” Audience members, who are chosen to become contestants, play games where they have to identify who could be a bully or which scenes show bullying. As the game show progresses, Frederico tries to stand up for the contestants, but the host makes fun of him in order to entertain the crowd. Carole is reluctant to interfere between Johnny and Frederico as tension rises. Eventually the host pushes Frederico too far and the whole game show grinds to a halt. Carole stands up to Johnny and enlists the audience to help Johnny realize that he is a bully and that bullying is a serious problem. *The Bully Show!* challenges upper elementary and middle-school students to reconsider some of their assumptions about bullies and victims, to realize some of the consequences of bullying, and to stimulate further discussions on this issue. It can uniquely augment the bullying programs already being led by school counselors and teachers. *The Bully Show!* was first produced by the Omaha Theater Company in public performances and as a touring show to the schools. *Unit set. Approximate running time: 55 minutes.*

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The Bully Show!

Brian Guehring

Dramatic Publishing



# THE BULLY SHOW!

An interactive play for young people

by

BRIAN GUEHRING

Selected by the Kennedy Center for the  
2002 New Visions/New Voices National Forum for  
Works in Progress



**Dramatic Publishing**

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For Michael  
Thank you for all the support, patience and love

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## AUTHOR'S NOTES:

*The Bully Show!* is a Theatre in Education (TIE) play. Theatre In Education combines theatrical elements with interactive moments in which audience participants work with actor-teachers toward an educational or social goal, using tools of theatre in service of this goal. The production of *The Bully Show!* (and any accompanying post-show workshops and study guides) hopes to challenge upper-elementary and middle-school students to reconsider some of their assumptions about bullies and victims, to realize some of the consequences of bullying, and to stimulate further discussions of this issue. *The Bully Show!* is geared to uniquely augment the bullying programs already being lead by school counselors and teachers.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY:

This play was developed through improvisation and presented as a staged reading in May 2002, at the Kennedy Center, as part of New Visions/New Voices 2002, a national forum on works in progress for theater for young audiences, with the following production team:

Director . . . . . Kevin Ehrhart  
Dramaturg . . . . . Michael Rupert  
Stage manager . . . . . Scooter Krattenmakery

JOHNNY . . . . . Michael Jerome Johnson  
VANNA . . . . . Elizabeth Pringle  
FREDERICO . . . . . Ian Le Valley

Discussion leader . . . . . Todd Lunden



*The Bully Show!* was first produced by the Omaha Theater Company as a touring show into the schools in the winter of 2003 with the following production team:

Director . . . . . Kevin Ehrhart  
Dramaturg. . . . . Michael Miller  
Set Design . . . . . Eric Voecks  
Costume Design. . . . . Helen Humble  
Sound Design. . . . . Kevin Ehrhart

JOHNNY . . . . . Kevin Barratt  
CAROLE . . . . . Amanda Kibler  
FREDERICO . . . . . Brian Guehring

*The Bully Show!* was subsequently produced by the Omaha Theater Company as a touring show into the schools and a public show at the Rose Blumkin Performing Arts Center in the winters of 2004-2006 with the following production team:

Director . . . . . Kevin Ehrhart  
Assistant Director . . . . . Janeve West

JOHNNY . . . . . Michael Wilhelm  
CAROLE . . . . . Amanda Kibler  
FREDERICO . . . . . Brian Guehring

*The Bully Show!* was then produced by the South Carolina Children's Theater (executive director Debbie Bell) in the winter of 2005, in the fall of 2005 and the winter of 2006 with high-school actors performing for an audience of 6th-graders.

# THE BULLY SHOW!

A Play in One Act  
For 2m., 1w. or 1m., 2w.  
(2 to 5 more actors may be used)

## CHARACTERS:

JOHNNY . . . . . smarmy TV quiz-show host  
CAROLE . . . . . perky game-show assistant  
FREDERICO . . . . . intelligent game-show assistant

Audience is in role as studio audience for game show and contestants in the show.

The actors playing Carole and Frederico act as the bullies, victims and spectators for the role-playing within the show.

Expanded cast ideas: A producer and camera people of the TV show could easily be added. They could warm up the audience and lead the post-show discussion. Two other assistants could be added (to help keep score, act out some of the characters and scenes within the games and such). Also, while originally played by a man, Johnny could be played as a female.

Approximate running time: 55 minutes.

# THE BULLY SHOW!

## INTRODUCTION

*(As the audience enters the playing space, they see the big flat background of a game show [this background also serves as a cover to create a backstage for the prop storage and costume changes]. The show logo is hidden when the audience enters. Three contestant podiums [with wipe-on/wipe-off boards and markers] and the host podium are set up in front of the set. Cheesy game-show MUSIC is playing as audience enters.*

*CAROLE and FREDERICO are putting the final touches on getting ready for the show. They introduce themselves in role and improvise conversations with groups of audience members to help them enter into role as the studio audience. For example:*

CAROLE. Welcome to our studio audience! Has anyone ever been to the taping of a television game show? Today we're taping a pilot of the new game show. A pilot is the first episode ever for a show. We'll then try to sell it to a major network for next season. Today will be exciting because we choose all the contestants from the studio audience. Who would like to be a contestant today? Well good luck and enjoy the show.

FREDERICO. Thanks for coming here today. Do you like game shows? What are your favorite game shows? Well today we're trying out a new game show that we hope gets picked up by a major television network. It's fabulous. What will really help us with the taping is if you guys can be really enthusiastic. Can you do it? Let's practice cheering really loudly. Great! Keep up that enthusiasm!

*(When all the students arrive, the game-show assistants return to the set:)*

FREDERICO. Greetings, everyone! For those of you that I didn't meet, my name is Frederico and this is Carole. We're just about ready to start and we're excited that you will be our first audience to see our game show. We will need your help during today's taping. Whenever Carole or I raise this sign, *(CAROLE raises "Applause" sign)* we need you to applaud as loudly as you can. But when this sign is raised, *(CAROLE flips sign to read "Quiet on the Set" side)* we need you to be as quiet as you can so the microphones can pick up the dialogue. Let's practice again. *(CAROLE raises "Applause" sign. Audience applauds. CAROLE switches sign to "Quiet" sign. Audience gets quiet.)* Excellent work, studio audience. Our producer has just signaled me that we are ready to begin. Carole, are you ready?

CAROLE. I'm ready.

FREDERICO. Studio audience, are you ready? *(Studio audience shouts yes.)* Great. We're starting in 5, 4, 3... *(FREDERICO mimes the last two numbers and then the theme MUSIC starts. The announcer is heard.)*

ANNOUNCER (*recorded*). Do you want to be popular? Do you want to have lots of power? Do you like having control? Well this is the game show for you! Let's see who in the audience is ready to win this game! Here's our host: Johnny Jameson.

(*FREDERICO holds up "Applause" sign.*)

JOHNNY. Thank you, thank you! I see some wonderful contestants out there! Some potential winners in our audience today, yes sirree. Are you ready to play? (*Audience reacts.*) Great! Let's go to Carole to learn the rules for our show!

CAROLE. Thank you, Johnny. For today's game show, we're going to play three sections. For each section, we're going to choose three contestants from the audience to join us on stage. The contestants will play the games until they hear this sound (*BUZZER sounds.*) At that moment the section is over, and the contestant with the highest score will become a finalist. A total of nine contestants today will vie for one of three places in our championship round and a chance to win our grand prize.

JOHNNY. And what is our grand prize, Rico?

FREDERICO (*to JOHNNY*). Actually, I go by my whole name, Frederico.

JOHNNY. Relax. Don't take yourself so seriously, Rico. Now, tell the audience about our grand prize.

FREDERICO. Today's grand prize will be year off from school, an all-expense-paid vacation, and a new home!

(*CAROLE holds up "Applause" sign.*)

**SECTION 1**

JOHNNY. I have a question for our studio audience. Who likes to win? Raise your hands high. You know it feels better than losing. Keep your hands in the air. These students already have an important quality to succeed in this show. Carole and Rico, choose our first three contestants from the students raising their hands.

FREDERICO. Don't you think it would be better to tell them what the show is about, first?

*(JOHNNY glares at FREDERICO and clears his throat. CAROLE takes FREDERICO's arm and leads him away from JOHNNY. They select three contestants from the audience.)*

CAROLE. The contestants for section 1 are ready!

JOHNNY. Let's meet our contestants. At podium number 1, what's your name? *(Contestant response.)* Would you like to have more power in your life? *(Contestant response.)* I thought so. Welcome to my show. Contestant #2, what's your name? *(Contestant response.)* And would you to be famous with lots of fans? *(Contestant response.)* I bet you would. Contestant #3, congratulations on being selected. Tell our audience your name. *(Contestant response.)* Do you think you are going to win? *(Contestant response.)* Good luck to you. Let's give a big round of applause for our first three brave contestants! *(Audience reaction.)* I think we're ready! Let's start, for the first time ever:

*(FREDERICO and CAROLE unveil the show logo as ALL announce different titles.)*

CAROLE & FREDERICO.  
The Bully Show!

JOHNNY.  
You Wanna Be a Bully!

*(The logo says YOU WANNA BE A BULLY!)*

JOHNNY *(repeating his title)*. You Wanna Be a Bully!  
 FREDERICO. Uh, Johnny, that's not the title we talked about in production meetings. When did the title change?  
 JOHNNY. It's my show. What I say, goes.  
 FREDERICO. What if one of these contestants doesn't want to be a bully?  
 JOHNNY. Are you kidding? Sure they do. They already said they want power and attention. Besides, they don't have a choice anymore. *(Laugh track.)*  
 FREDERICO. But, that's not what we're trying to do...  
 CAROLE. Frederico, hey, Johnny hired us. He's in charge of the show. It's OK. Let's get ready for our first scenes.

*(FREDERICO returns to CAROLE.)*

### **SECTION 1, Game 1: How to be a Bully!**

JOHNNY. Our first game will be "How to Be a Bully!" *(CAROLE holds up "Applause" sign.)* Obviously, to be a successful bully, you will need a wide variety of techniques. To be the best bully, you have to know all the ways to be a bully. Contestants, you are going to see five scenes and you have to decide which ones show

bullying. After each scene, mark your board if you thought it showed bullying. Let's see scene 1.

*(FREDERICO walks on as a tough guy. CAROLE acts as a neutral student . The emphasis is on the bully.)*

FREDERICO *(threateningly)*. Hey, give me your lunch money or I'll beat you up.

*(CAROLE gives up lunch money.)*

JOHNNY. Scene. *(CAROLE and FREDERICO pop out of character.)* Great. Short, simple, and to the point. Was that bullying? Mark your board if you thought so. Let's see if scene 2 shows bullying?

*(CAROLE walks on as bully with FREDERICO as victim.)*

CAROLE. Do you want to go to the mall with us? *(FREDERICO nods and gets hopeful.)* Oh, I'm sorry, you can't go if you're wearing those shoes again. I told you yesterday and the day before that and the day before that, your shoes are so last year. Don't you have any taste at all? *(Looking at his shirt.)* Oops, I guess not. *(CAROLE laughs.)* Oh, come on. Can't you take a joke? I was just joking. You are too sensitive. *(FREDERICO gains a little hope.)* You're worse than a little girl. *(CAROLE laughs.)* No wonder you don't have any friends. *(To offstage friends.)* He actually thought we were inviting him to the mall with us. *(CAROLE laughs and walks off.)*



JOHNNY. Scene. (*CAROLE and FREDERICO pop out of character.*) That was interesting. She wasn't very nice, but there was no physical contact, right?

FREDERICO. She didn't touch me.

JOHNNY. Great. What did you think, contestants? Did that scene show bullying? Let's see the third scene.

(*FREDERICO walks on and "accidentally" shoulders into CAROLE causing her to drop her books.*)

FREDERICO (*sarcastically*). So sorry. (*CAROLE picks up the books and tries to move. FREDERICO stands in her way and keeps moving to block her from getting past.*) I'm sorry. Wow, it seems like I keep getting in your way. And this happens every day in this same hallway. So sorry.

(*CAROLE picks up her books and finally goes the opposite way she wanted to. FREDERICO smiles.*)

JOHNNY. Scene. (*CAROLE and FREDERICO pop out of character.*) He seemed really apologetic. Contestants, mark your boards if you thought that was bullying. Let's move on to scene 4.

(*CAROLE is standing at the locker. FREDERICO walks up.*)

FREDERICO. Hey, how are you doing? (*CAROLE doesn't answer and in fact turns away. FREDERICO walks around to the other side of her.*) Did you see "American Idol" last night? (*CAROLE looks at him icily and turns*

*away.*) Aren't you talking to me? (*FREDERICO taps CAROLE on the shoulder. She ignores it.*) I thought we were friends. Did I do something wrong? (*CAROLE shrugs her shoulders and smiles.*) What's going on today? Everyone is ignoring me today. Did you tell everyone to ignore me? Why? (*CAROLE smirks and crosses her arms. FREDERICO exits.*)

JOHNNY. Scene. (*CAROLE and FREDERICO pop out of character.*) Interesting. And now our last scene, #5.

*(FREDERICO and CAROLE enter as good friends. They laugh and smile during this scene.)*

FREDERICO. Hey, goofy.

CAROLE. Good afternoon, string bean.

FREDERICO. Nice job during gym today. I liked how you completely missed the soccer ball when you tried to kick it.

CAROLE. At least I didn't trip every other time up the field.

FREDERICO. I know, I'm such a klutz.

CAROLE. I guess we shouldn't count on making our fortunes in professional sports.

JOHNNY. Scene. (*CAROLE and FREDERICO pop out of character.*) Contestants, check your board for your final answer. For that ends game 1.

*(CAROLE and FREDERICO return to their podium.)*

JOHNNY. Let's see who you voted for. Hold up your boards. Contestant 1 voted for scenes \_\_\_\_\_. (*JOHNNY reads answers out loud.*) Interesting. Contestant 2

thought scenes \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ showed bullying. (*JOHNNY reads answers from Contestant 2 out loud.*) Contestant 3 identified scenes \_\_\_, \_\_\_, and \_\_\_. (*JOHNNY reads Contestant 3's answers.*) Looks like we have some disagreement about scene number \_\_\_. (*If there is no disagreement, JOHNNY says: Are you sure about scene number 4? JOHNNY reminds the audience which scene that was about such as: That's the scene where Carole wouldn't talk to Frederico.*) Let's see if the audience agrees. How many in the audience think it's bullying? How many people think that wasn't bullying. Interesting. Let's see who's right. Freddy, tell us which scenes showed bullying.

FREDERICO. The correct answers are scenes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Bullying can be threatening and physical like scene 1. Bullying can include incessant teasing and name-calling like scene 2. Tripping and blocking in scene 3 was also bullying. Even the silent treatment in the fourth scene is bullying. Bullying is repeatedly hurting another person who has less power than you do. The last scene wasn't bullying, though. Good-natured teasing between friends is not bullying. The fifth scene showed two good friends who weren't trying to hurt each other.

CAROLE. So each contestant gets 10 points for each correct scene they voted for. And negative 10 points if they voted for scene 5. So the scores after game one are \_\_\_. (*CAROLE marks the score tally on each podium as she announces the score.*)

**SECTION 1, Game 2: Spot the Bully!**

JOHNNY. Looks like we have a close competition after the first game. Anyone can still win this section. Let's move on to our next game, "Spot the Bully!" (*CAROLE holds up the "Applause" sign.*) Contestants, Freddie and Carole are going to do a little playacting and portray four different students. You have to choose who could be a bully. Now to help you out, I will ask questions so you can get to know these students better. Remember, contestants, it always helps a budding bully if he has role models to look up to. Let's meet the first student.

A is an overly large 12-year-old 5th-grader who enjoys stepping on ants and watching wrestling.

(*FREDERICO walks on as A, the stereotypical bully.*)

JOHNNY. Welcome, A.

A. Yea. Whatever.

JOHNNY. So tell us, who's in your family?

A. My dad and two stupid older brothers.

JOHNNY. Do you like school?

A. No. I hate school.

JOHNNY. Are you good at school?

A. What do you think?

JOHNNY. Do a lot of kids at school like you?

A. No. But a lot of 'em are scared of me.

JOHNNY. Do you like your life?

A. No, my life stinks.

JOHNNY. Do you wish you had more stuff?

A (*smiling a little evilly*). Yea.

End of Excerpt-Post Show

**POST SHOW DISCUSSION**

CAROLE ACTRESS. Thank you guys so much for being a great audience. My real name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We are not really creating a new game show. This game was obviously rigged from the beginning, too. So thanks for being good sports. We are actually actors from \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of theater*). And we are not trying to teach kids to be bullies. The point of this show was to grab your attention and make you think about bullies in a new way. Before we let you go, we have a few questions we want discuss with you.

JOHNNY ACTOR. When we were researching this show, we found some new information that really surprised us. What information did you learn today that you didn't know before the show started? Did anything surprise you? (*ACTOR takes a few responses from the audience.*) I wanted to emphasize that anyone could be a bully. We all have the potential to hurt others through our words or actions, so we should be really aware of our own behavior.

FREDERICO ACTOR. I wanted to talk to you about the role of the victim. Anyone can be a target of bullies. What are the best ways to deal with a bully if you are the victim? What techniques worked best during the show today? (*ACTOR takes suggestions from the audience.*) Good. So remember, travel in groups, stand up for yourself, and tell your teacher, counselor, or principal. If someone is bullying you, they are probably bullying others too. The staff at the school can't help if they don't know it's happening.

CAROLE ACTRESS. I wanted to discuss the role of spectator. How many in the audience laughed today? Obviously we were trying to be funny and entertaining to grab your attention. How many people have seen “American Idol” (*or similar pop-culture reality show*). Well Simon Cowell is a bully on that show. He makes fun of people and millions of people watch each week and laugh. A lot of pop culture is selling bullying as comedy and that’s making the problem worse. If you laugh at a clever bully here at school, you are giving the bully what he or she wants. Sometimes it’s hard not to laugh. Bullies can be very clever. We all have the potential to empower bullies. We also all can be part of the solution. Don’t laugh at bullies. Stand up for the targets.

JOHNNY ACTOR. If you have more questions or concerns, make sure you discuss them with your counselor and teachers. They know a lot about bullying and have resources that can help you get answers to your questions.

FREDERICO. Thanks a lot for being a great audience. And hopefully you all can think about this and help make this school a safer place for everyone to learn.