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*Dramatic Publishing*

# The Excuser



Comedy  
by  
Werner Trieschmann

# The Excuser

**Comedy.** By Werner Trieschmann. *Cast: 15 to 20, either gender.* Welcome to America's hottest new reality show—"The Excuser!" Everybody knows that there's an art to a good excuse, and nobody knows that better than the billionaire—or maybe that's millionaire?—Harold (or Maude) Clump. Clump, who has never met a day with good hair and so has hair assistants on constant standby, holds "The Excuser!" competition in a storage room—no, boardroom, it's a *boardroom!*—of the Clump high-rise (and, sure, you can call three stories a high-rise). Clump prizes a good excuse because that's how fortunes are made. But when Clump hears something that doesn't fly, it's time to send the competitor home with the trademark (yes, the trademark papers are in the mail!) phrase "That's no excuse!" The contestants are a mixed bag to be sure. There are the cheerleader identical twins who have the odd distinction of not really looking alike. There's the kid who always seems to have his head in the clouds and the other kid who can't stop talking. The student body president seems to always have a way of talking himself out of a jam. But what hope could the exchange student have, especially since nobody can understand a word he (or is it she?) says or even what country the student is from? Whatever the results, *The Excuser* is sure to bring home the laughs to your audiences, but if not we're sure there's a very good reason, er, excuse. *Unit set. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: E62.*

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# THE EXCUSER

A Comedy  
by  
WERNER TRIESCHMANN



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# The Excuser

## CHARACTERS

All roles can be played by men or women. Please change the names and pronouns as needed for your casting choices.

HAROLD/MAUDE CLUMP

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2

CAMERAMAN/WOMAN

HAIR ASSISTANT #1

HAIR ASSISTANT #2

STACY ..... cheerleader

TRACY ..... cheerleader

VINCE/VIOLET ..... space case

GABBY/GABE ..... talker

MURIEL/MARTIN ..... goth kid

REILLY ..... average kid with no noticeable quirks

EBILE ..... foreign exchange student

OFFICE WORKER #1

OFFICE WORKER #2

ENGLISH TEACHER

LANDLORD



## ADDITIONAL CHARACTER NOTES

STACY & TRACY: identical twins who look nothing alike. They should be cast as differently as possible.

MURIEL/MARTIN: dresses in black and wears headphones.

EBILE: ambiguous gender and wears clothes that make it difficult to determine a nationality. The character might be dressed in a Scottish kilt with a Jamaican T-shirt, or perhaps brightly colored Indian clothes with blue-jean overalls. EBILE speaks in made-up gibberish that is a mixture of French, German, Spanish, English and whatever else the actor wants to add.

## TIME AND PLACE

Prime time—or something close to it. The Clump boardroom, which also doubles as a storage closet.

## SETTING

An empty space with some boxes, a big push broom, a dolly and other things that would indicate a storage closet. At center stage is a chair on rollers that is sitting in front of a card table or some kind of other equally unimpressive table. There are also several signs scattered about that say CLUMP and the boxes also have the word CLUMP on them.

# The Excuser

*PRESHOW: During preshow as audience is filing in, CAMERAMAN comes out on the empty stage. He looks around, fishes a phone out of a pocket and then checks angles for filming. After a moment, he yawns and finds a spot on the stage (hopefully behind some boxes) to take a nap.*

*Lights down.*

*AT RISE: Lights up on CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 and CLUMP ASSISTANT #2 standing C. They are smiling but appear a little nervous, occasionally looking offstage to see if someone is coming.*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Hello and wel—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Yes, hello and welcome to ...  
*(Looks at and nudges CLUMP ASSISTANT #1.) That's you!*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 *(to CLUMP ASSISTANT #2)*. You already stepped on my line, you doofus. *(Turns to the audience.)* All right, anyway, welcome to an exciting new season of "The Excuser!" This is America's favorite—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2.—*one of their favorites.*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. OK, now you're just being difficult—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. One of their favorite reality shows.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 (*to audience*). Of course you all know “The Excuser!” is where Harold Clump says his trademarked line, “That’s no excuse!”

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2 (*with a stricken look*). Oh I wouldn’t say that.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. What? That’s his phrase, “That’s no excuse!”

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. But I was supposed to send in the trademark papers—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. You *didn’t* send in the trademark papers?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Well, no. But you should have *seen* the line at the post office and the people in it had packages the size of refrigerators and I was standing right behind a guy who was eating a burrito and at first I was disgusted and then I was hungry and then I was disgusted again and then I was *really* hungry and there wasn’t a burrito place near ...

*(CLUMP ASSISTANT #2 stops and sees CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 staring at him.)*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. You didn’t send in the trademark papers?!

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Did you miss the part about the line and the refrigerators and the burrito?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Of all the boneheaded things—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. I’m not the bonehead. You’re the bonehead.

*(CLUMP is wheeled in by chair, wheelbarrow or dolly by HAIR ASSISTANT #1 and HAIR ASSISTANT #2. They try to wheel him in and spray his hair at the same time.)*

CLUMP. You are both boneheads because you are not me, Harold Clump. But that's understandable as nobody has my business savvy, my instincts for the market or my hair. Especially my hair. My real hair. Right?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Yes. Of course.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Right. You're right, sir.

CLUMP *(to HAIR ASSISTANTS)*. Give me more spray. You know how I like a lot of spray. It's OK, I can afford it. *(HAIR ASSISTANTS fill the air above CLUMP's head with hairspray.)* All right. You, whats-your-face, for not renewing the trademark papers—That's no excuse!

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2 *(genuinely pleased)*. Oh thank you for that, sir.

CLUMP. Are we ready to start the new season of "The Excuser!"?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Yes, sir.

CLUMP. No, we aren't ready. We haven't talked enough about me. Everybody knows how smart I am and how rich I am and how the name Clump stands for everything great. But we can talk about me some more. We need to remind everybody that "The Excuser!" comes to you from the fabulous Clump Tower.

HAIR ASSISTANT #1. Isn't this is like a three-story building?

CLUMP. But we have a basement so it's really four stories. So that's a tower. Four stories is a tower and everybody knows that. OK. We need to remind everybody that "The Excuser!" is being filmed in the fabulous Clump Tower

boardroom. This is where I direct all the things I am involved in and make all the money I make—

HAIR ASSISTANT #2. My last payroll check bounced.

CLUMP. That was a problem with the bank and wasn't my fault. I am very wealthy and everybody knows that. Right?

*(Both CLUMP ASSISTANTS say the next lines quickly and together.)*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Oh yes. Lots of moola.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Filthy rich. Bags and bags of money.

CLUMP *(shoots look at HAIR ASSISTANT #2)*. See. Now back to the Clump Tower boardroom. I am sure you have noticed that we also store some things in here like brooms and things because that's a smart thing to do.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. It's an efficient use of space.

CLUMP. That's what I meant to say. I was going to say that. Harold Clump is always doing the smart thing. That's why I put my name, Clump, on everything.

*(CLUMP pulls a name tag or a large sticker with the word Clump clearly written on it and slaps it on the forehead of HAIR ASSISTANT #2.)*

HAIR ASSISTANT #2. Hey!

CLUMP. See, that's better already. All right, let's get on with my show. Wait. Harold Clump is the best thing since sliced banana bread. OK. Now we can go. Wait, wait, where's the cameraman?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 (*to CLUMP ASSISTANT #2*).

Right, where is the cameraman?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. When did that become *my* job?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Oh I don't know, probably when you didn't do your other jobs.

HAIR ASSISTANT #1. Hey. There's like a guy sleeping on the floor over here.

*(CAMERAMAN wakes up.)*

CAMERAMAN. Sorry.

CLUMP. That's him.

CAMERAMAN. I have narcolepsy.

CLUMP. He has narcolepsy.

CAMERAMAN. It's where you get tired and fall asleep ...

*(Lays back down on the floor.)*

CLUMP. It's OK. He'll wake up in time. He's one of the best cameramen. When he's awake. Let's do this. *(Points to CLUMP ASSISTANT #1.)* You, what's your name again?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Dad, you don't remember my name?!

CLUMP. Oh yeah sure I do Steven—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. It's Brad!

CLUMP. I knew that. I was going to say that. It's not my fault. Your mother gave you all these weird names that are hard to remember.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Brad isn't a weird name!

CLUMP. It's a weird name. Everybody agrees with me that it's weird.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2 & HAIR ASSISTANTS. Oh yeah. Really different. Strange. You're right.

CLUMP. See? All right, weird Brad, introduce us to the contestants on “The Excuser!” brought to you by me, Harold Clump.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. It’s a very common name. You see it on novelty license plates! *(Turns to the audience.)* First we have twin cheerleaders, Stacy and Tracy.

*(STACY and TRACY come onstage running or doing somersaults.)*

STACY & TRACY. Two, four, six, eight! Who do we appreciate? Clump! Clump! HarOLD CLUMP! Yeah! Yay! Whoo-hoo!

STACY. Mr. Clump, I just have to say that my twin sister and me think you are the best.

TRACY. The best!

CLUMP. Well, I am.

STACY. And we’re going to win “The Excuser!”

TRACY. Like really for sure!

CLUMP *(nodding approvingly)*. See, I like their chances.

STACY. We know it’s hard to tell us apart but remember I am Stacy!

TRACY. And, like, I am Tracy!

STACY & TRACY *(move to the side while doing some cheers)*. Yay! Whoo! Go Clump!

HAIR ASSISTANT #1. They don’t look anything alike.

STACY & TRACY. We’re twins!

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Our next contestant on “The Excuser!” is Vince. *(There is a pause.)* Our next contestant is Vince. *(Looks offstage.)* Vince!

*(VINCE now wanders onstage.)*

VINCE. Hey. Sorry. What is all this?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. “The Excuser!” The TV show.

VINCE. Oh yeah?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. You signed a contract.

VINCE. I did?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Yes!

VINCE. Wow.

*(VINCE walks to the side of the stage and joins the cheerleaders.)*

STACY & TRACY. Yay Vince! Go Vince! You’re gonna come in second place! Whooh!

CLUMP. Now somebody like that, who looks to be dumb as a box of walnuts, could still win “The Excuser!” That’s the great thing about this show that I created and own all of the subsidiary rights and ancillary rights and moon base rights and any other rights.

*(GABBY walks onstage.)*

GABBY. Are you gonna introduce me? C’mon, I’ve been waiting.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Here’s our next contestant, Mr. Clump. Meet Ga—

GABBY. I’m Gabby, Mr. Clump. With a “y”. Not an “i” because that would be icky. So anyways thanks for having me. Happy to be here. Really like your show and know I can win this thing because I am very good with



the excuses and just watch me in action and you won't be disappointed—

CLUMP. All right. So who is—

GABBY. I would love to pick the brain of a guy like you Mr. Clump and find out what it takes to be a big shot because that's what I want to go to the top and stay there and then who knows have a big place to live and maybe my own private zoo with really different animals like naked mole rats and gazelles and whatever just have my own collection like I could keep and—

CLUMP. OK, Gabby. Are you done?

STACY & TRACY. Go Gabby! Be quiet! Go Gabby! Stop talking!

GABBY. Yeah, but don't you think a private zoo would be so freakin' awesome especially if you had like leopards living with like camels and just mix everything up and—

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. This is a half-hour show, you know.

*(GABBY moves over to the side with STACY, TRACY and VINCE.)*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 *(cont'd)*. Let's move on and introduce our next contestant, Muriel.

*(MURIEL walks onstage.)*

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 *(cont'd)*. Muriel, do you have any strategy for coming out on top on "The Excuser!"?

*(MURIEL looks at CLUMP ASSISTANT #1.)*

MURIEL (*taking off her headphones*). I just want to say I hate TV and I hate competitions on TV.

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. But why are you here?

MURIEL. Because this gets me out of the other thing I hate—high school. (*Moves over to the side with STACY, TRACY, VINCE and GABBY.*)

STACY & TRACY. Go Muriel! Hate TV! Go Muriel! Hate high school!

(*MURIEL stares at STACY and TRACY and they stop cheering.*)

CLUMP (*to CLUMP ASSISTANT #1*). OK, you. You! What's your name again?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. Brad! It's Brad!

CLUMP. That's right. Brad. Really weird name. So is this all of the contestants?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1. No, Dad, it's not.

CLUMP. Well, we need to stop and fix my hair and talk about me some more. (*Turns to the HAIR ASSISTANTS.*) Spray. (*HAIR ASSISTANTS spray CLUMP's hair.*) Looks great, right?

HAIR ASSISTANT #1. It's really kind of sticking out right—

CLUMP (*to audience*). You know I've been smarter than everybody since I was in kindergarten. The other boys and girls would do their little craft projects and make their doggies out of dried macaroni. But I knew in order to get out of any work I would pretend I ate too much paste or I was scared of scissors or something like that. See I knew even then about how important it is to have an excuse. A really good excuse is worth its weight in gold. Could I

have made crafts better than anybody else? Absolutely. I mean, I could make a doggie out of dried macaroni. I would have made the best doggie out of dried macaroni that anybody has ever seen. Right?

CLUMP ASSISTANT #1 & CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. Absolutely, Mr. Clump. The Picasso of dried macaroni doggies, that's you.

CLUMP. Anyway, all of this is in my autobiography, *You're Lucky to Know Me: The Story of Harold Clump*. Everybody in our audience out there has a copy under their seat. You're welcome. That copy of the book is yours as long as you pay for it on the way out. (*To the HAIR ASSISTANTS.*) More spray. I felt it move a little bit. (*The HAIR ASSISTANTS apply more hair spray.*) OK, who is next on my incredible show? Wait, I need to put my name on something. (*CLUMP puts a Clump sticker on STACY.*)

STACY. Yay!

TRACY. You got Clumped!

STACY & TRACY. I got Clumped! Yay!

CLUMP. No need to thank me.

STACY. Thank you!

CLUMP ASSISTANT #2. OK, Mr. Clump, the next contestant on "The Excuser!" is Reilly.

(*REILLY walks onstage.*)

REILLY. Hello.

CLUMP. Reilly, what makes you think you can be the last one standing in "The Excuser!"?

REILLY. I don't really know.

CLUMP. Then I don't know that I like your chances.