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A Good Guy

By

DAVID RAMBO

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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DAVID RAMBO

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(A GOOD GUY)

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“The first professional production of *A Good Guy* was at
Rogue Machine Theatre, Los Angeles, in 2024 by John Perrin Flynn and
Guillermo Cienfuegos, Artistic Directors, and directed by John Perrin Flynn.”

A Good Guy was premiered by Rogue Machine Theatre (Los Angeles) in 2024. John Perrin Flynn and Guillermo Cienfuegos, artistic directors.

CAST:

ANNA Evangeline Edwards

DETECTIVE/HISTORY/

PRINCIPAL/MICHAEL/INSTRUCTOR/

NARRATOR Wayne Carr

SECOND DETECTIVE/LANGUAGE ARTS/

MS. WIZNER/SUPERINTENDENT/ LAWYER/

ANOTHER NARRATOR Suzen Baraka

THE STUDENT Logan Leonardo Arditty

PRODUCTION:

Director John Perrin Flynn

Producers Jennifer Sorenson and Guillermo Cienfuegos

Scenic Design Jan Munroe

Lighting Design Dan Weingarten

Sound Design Christoper Moscatiello

Costume Design Christine Cover Ferro

Casting Victoria Hoffman

Stage Manager Rich Wong

A Good Guy

CHARACTERS

ANNA
THE STUDENT
DETECTIVE
HISTORY
PRINCIPAL
MICHAEL
INSTRUCTOR
NARRATOR
SECOND DETECTIVE
LANGUAGE ARTS
MS. WIZNER
SUPERINTENDENT
LAWYER
ANOTHER NARRATOR

SETTING: Where you live.

TIME: Now.

CASTING NOTE: The roles of THE STUDENT and ANNA must always be cast individually, but there is flexibility for doubling the other roles. For the smallest possible cast of 4, the following doubling is possible:

Actor 1

DETECTIVE

HISTORY

PRINCIPAL

MICHAEL

INSTRUCTOR

NARRATOR

Actor 2

SECOND DETECTIVE

LANGUAGE ARTS

MS. WIZNER

SUPERINTENDENT

LAWYER

ANOTHER NARRATOR

Dedicated to my teachers.

A Good Guy

SCENE 1

(From darkness, light hits ANNA, seated in a classroom chair. There is a voice recorder near her, but she pays no attention to it.)

ANNA. I love teaching.

I never wanted to do anything else.

My mom always talked about how when I was about two, she caught me with all my dolls and stuffed animals in front of me, and I was teaching them. I didn't even know what a teacher was, but that's what I was doing.

And in preschool, dear Lord, the heavens opened up. I loved it. I threw a fit when I had to go home at the end of the day. I just idolized the teacher, Ms. Wizner, which I pronounced "Wishner," and thought she was a fairy godmother who could grant your heart's dearest wish. Apparently I asked—my mom told me this—I asked Ms. Wishner if she could make me a teacher when I grew up.

I never wanted to do anything else.

It's not easy. Eighth grade ... I mean, it's really hard. The kids are still kids, but by now the girls know they're maturing faster than the boys. And they lord it over all creation.

And the boys ... well, two things you have to remember about middle-school boys. They don't want to be told what to do, and they don't want to have feelings. And you see some suddenly get obsessed with grooming and keeping their hair just so—oh God, they're so funny. But more and

more it seems they only want to play video games or smoke weed. Or talk about playing video games and smoking weed. You really have to fight for their attention—girls and boys both. But when you do get it, and you see them make a connection between what you're teaching now and something they learned before, and that light goes on ... *learning* ... well, that's everything.

I mean ... everything.

(A voice from the darkness.)

DETECTIVE. When did you start keeping a gun in your classroom?

(Lights reveal a DETECTIVE listening to ANNA's story. A SECOND DETECTIVE takes notes.)

ANNA. About two years ago.

DETECTIVE. Any special reason?

ANNA. In case something like this happened.

DETECTIVE. You thought someone with a gun could break in and start shooting.

ANNA. No. I mean, yes. I mean ... I hoped it would be like when you hear it's supposed to rain, so you bring an umbrella. And then it doesn't rain.

But you still have active shooter drills. And you see stories in the news, more and more it seems. You hear about a kid in some town who managed to hide an arsenal right under his parents' noses. You notice that boy in last period who always looks angry has started wearing camo every day ...

(Beat.)

DETECTIVE. Would you like some water?

ANNA. Sure.

(The DETECTIVE looks at the SECOND DETECTIVE, who turns a walkie-talkie on.)

SECOND DETECTIVE *(murmurs into the walkie-talkie)*.
Could we get some waters in here?

(The DETECTIVE checks the voice recorder. All good. He continues.)

DETECTIVE. So, your gun ... it's a Glock 42?

ANNA. Yes. A lady gun. A mouse gun.

DETECTIVE. And where do you ordinarily keep it?

ANNA. By the bed.

DETECTIVE. I mean at school.

ANNA. In my desk.

DETECTIVE. In your classroom.

ANNA. Yes. In a locked gun box. In a locked drawer.

DETECTIVE. And where were the keys?

ANNA. In my pocket, usually. Sometimes my purse.

DETECTIVE. And the ammunition?

ANNA. In my purse. In a zip-up bag, like for makeup.

DETECTIVE. When did you get the gun?

ANNA. Two years ago. It's registered; I have the papers at home. Bought it at a sporting goods store. And I took classes at a shooting range. They said I was a natural.

DETECTIVE. So, you didn't use firearms previously?

ANNA. No.

Wait—at Girl Scouts camp, I won a ribbon for marksmanship. They said I was a natural, too.

DETECTIVE. Is there any special reason—anything happen—two years ago that prompted you to buy a gun?

ANNA. My husband—I was married then—was on a long deployment, and I was alone.

DETECTIVE. No children.

ANNA. I have 200 children every year.

DETECTIVE. You bought a gun because you were alone in the house.

ANNA. It was my husband's idea. I was having trouble sleeping. Our house is way out, and at night, I'd lie awake, thinking if someone broke in, till the police got there, I could be dead. He thought if I had a gun, it would help me feel more safe.

DETECTIVE. And did it?

(As ANNA is about to answer "No," a discreet knock interrupts. The SECOND DETECTIVE exits and returns with three bottles of water. Everyone takes sips.)

DETECTIVE *(cont'd)*. I want to be sure we have this right. About two years ago, you started bringing a registered Glock 42 to school.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. And took it home with you at night?

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. You transported it how?

ANNA. In my purse.

DETECTIVE. With the ammunition clip?

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. Through the metal detectors?

ANNA. Most of us use our keycards to come in the side doors—it's closer to faculty parking.

DETECTIVE. Who knew you had the gun?

ANNA. No one.

DETECTIVE. And besides you, who had a key to your desk?

ANNA. I suppose the principal. And Connie.

DETECTIVE. Connie?

ANNA. His administrative assistant.

DETECTIVE. Were you concerned someone might discover the gun?

ANNA. I kept my desk locked and didn't really think about it.

Am I going to lose my job?

DETECTIVE. I can't imagine why you would.

ANNA. I don't want to lose my job.

DETECTIVE. That isn't something I can help you with. So, the ammo clip was in your purse.

ANNA. Yes, I told you.

DETECTIVE. And where did you keep your purse?

ANNA. In my desk.

DETECTIVE. The same drawer as the gun box, or another one?

ANNA. Another one.

DETECTIVE. Was the drawer with the purse locked?

ANNA. Not when I was in the room. I keep my purse in the second drawer on the left side. The right side drawers—

DETECTIVE. Where the gun box was.

ANNA. Are always locked.

DETECTIVE. So, it's possible that if you were called out for some reason and didn't bother to lock your left side drawers, someone could have access to your purse with the ammo clip and the key for the drawer with the gun box—

ANNA. WHY ARE YOU TREATING ME LIKE I'M A CRIMINAL?

DETECTIVE. We're just trying to get the complete picture.

ANNA. I stopped an insane boy from murdering children.

(Beat.)

DETECTIVE. Anna, there are going to be multiple investigations, lawsuits. You'll be hounded by the media. We'll be hounded by the media.

ANNA. What will you tell them?

DETECTIVE. As little as possible.

ANNA. Do I need a lawyer?

DETECTIVE. You have that right.

ANNA. That's what you say to criminals.

DETECTIVE. I don't think you're a criminal. Have some water.

ANNA. Don't tell me what to do.

DETECTIVE. We're not your enemy.

ANNA. You're not my friends. *(She takes a sip of her water.)*

DETECTIVE. Let's go over the rest of what happened today.

ANNA. I want to go home.

DETECTIVE. Just need a few more details while they're fresh in your mind.

ANNA. I want to take a long, hot shower. And have some wine. And curl up and watch bachelorettes or house flippers, or—

DETECTIVE. Please sit down.

ANNA. Am I not free to go?

DETECTIVE. We're on your side, Anna. We need to get as full a picture as you can remember while the memories are fresh.

(Beat. ANNA sits. The DETECTIVE proceeds carefully.)

DETECTIVE (*cont'd*). When you came to school this morning. Do you recall anything unusual?

ANNA. Define unusual.

DETECTIVE. Kids acting suspiciously, graffiti you didn't see before, a kid wearing something with symbols or concealing their face—

ANNA. No, nothing like that. It was ... normal. I had three morning classes.

DETECTIVE. And you teach—?

ANNA. Eighth-grade math—we're just beginning functions. And after the morning classes, I went down to the cafeteria for lunch. I'm a monitor this week.

DETECTIVE. Did you take your purse?

ANNA. No.

DETECTIVE. Where was it?

ANNA. Locked in my desk. I had the keys with me.

DETECTIVE. So, while you were out of your classroom, your desk drawers on both sides were locked.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. In the cafeteria, did you observe anyone behaving in an unusual manner?

ANNA. "Unusual." The kids were in their little groups. And they're loud. Stuck to their phones, playing games, checking likes and followers, trying to sneak an embarrassing photo of a kid they hate. Does any of that sound "unusual?"

DETECTIVE. You tell me.

ANNA. No. Nothing unusual.

DETECTIVE. Did you notice kids acting in a manner that could be called ... (*What's the word?*) conspiratorial?

ANNA. Every day. But it was just that one boy, right?

DETECTIVE. Probably, but we don't know yet. Did you recognize him?

(Beat.)

ANNA. Never saw his face. Who was he?

DETECTIVE. There hasn't been an official identification.

So, after lunch—

ANNA. After lunch, I stopped in the faculty lounge to use the bathroom. Spoke with a few colleagues.

DETECTIVE. Anyone mention anything out of the ordinary?

ANNA. That's the thing. It was all ordinary. Nothing unusual.

The whole day—

(A sharp stab of unwanted memory.)

DETECTIVE. Anna?

ANNA. I couldn't remember anything when I came in here.

Now I'm remembering too much.

DETECTIVE. You're doing fine.

(ANNA takes a sip of water. The DETECTIVE sips water. The SECOND DETECTIVE sips water.)

ANNA. Do they know how many kids were hurt?

DETECTIVE. As far as we know, eleven children and two adults were killed.

ANNA. Dear Lord ... *(Then.)*

That includes the shooter?

DETECTIVE. Yes. *(Then.)*

And eight are hospitalized, some critical. Others were treated at the scene and sent home.

ANNA. I'd like to be sent home.

DETECTIVE. Just a few more details.

ANNA. Is this your specialty?

DETECTIVE. What do you mean?

ANNA. Have you worked on many ... *incidents* like this?

DETECTIVE. This is the first.

ANNA. Did you ever think you'd have one?

DETECTIVE. Statistically, they don't happen very frequently.

ANNA. And then, one day, you're a statistic.

(Beat.)

DETECTIVE. So, after lunch, you were in the faculty lounge.

Then where did you go?

ANNA. Back to my classroom.

DETECTIVE. And then?

(Beat. She knows she has to do this.)

ANNA. We were about eight or nine minutes into the class when we heard an explosion, like a bomb, across the courtyard. Was that how the kid—the shooter—got into the building?

DETECTIVE. Yes. What did you do when you heard it?

ANNA. I froze. Everybody froze. Then, the alarm went off and before I could stop them, a few boys raced out to see what was happening. I yelled at them to stay inside, but ... *boys*.

DETECTIVE. Your classroom door was unlocked.

ANNA. From the inside, yes. It's locked if you try to come in from the hall.

DETECTIVE. All right. The boys ran out.

ANNA. Are they OK?

DETECTIVE. We're still piecing it together, matching up kids with classrooms. *(Then.)*

And then?

ANNA. I heard shooting. Lots of shooting across the courtyard. And screams. Shots. Screams ...

(She resists continuing.)

DETECTIVE. Take me through it.

(She doesn't want to.)

DETECTIVE *(cont'd)*. Put me in your shoes, Anna. Some boys ran out to the hall, you hear shooting—

ANNA. Down by the library. Rapid fire. Like automatic weapon fire. Short bursts. And screams ... kids screaming ... my heart ... I could hear my heart.

I had to protect my kids. I ran back in from the hall.

DETECTIVE. Did you close the door?

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. So, now the door's locked again.

ANNA. Yes, from the outside. I kept an eye on it in case the boys tried to come back, I could let them in. Can't you find out if they're OK?

DETECTIVE. We're working on it. Let's keep going. After you closed the door—

ANNA. I realized some of the kids were crying, *terrified*. And Connie's on the P.A. And she's crying, too, telling us there's an active shooter in the building and to follow the protocol from our drills. All I could think was, if Connie's the one making the announcement, Doug must be dead.

DETECTIVE. Doug Blatchley, the principal.

ANNA. Yes. Is he OK?

DETECTIVE. We think he may have been the first to go down.

(ANNA tries not to visualize it. It's too horrible.)

DETECTIVE *(cont'd)*. So, you heard the announcement ...

ANNA. And I tried to get my kids to quiet down and focus—they were texting their parents and calling them to say, “I love you.” The shooting started again.

We all thought we were going to die.

I told the kids, take cover and turn off their phones—I didn't want a phone to give away where a kid might be hiding.

DETECTIVE. How many kids are in the room at this point?

ANNA. Three boys ran out ... and we had two absent ... so, thirty-one.

DETECTIVE. How do you hide thirty-one kids?

ANNA. You can't. But we did what we do in the drills. I got as many as could fit in the supply closet. And the rest piled desks against the door—any barrier helps. And then they dragged the rest of the desks along the wall that runs alongside the door and hid down behind them.

DETECTIVE. Did you have your gun out at this point?

ANNA. Not until I had the kids squared away.

DETECTIVE. And then—

ANNA. I unlocked the drawer where my purse was to get the clip. Then the other drawer and the gun box. And the shooting's coming closer. And another bomb goes off. And more screams. And then there's a silence. The alarm had stopped.

My heart was so heavy, struggling to keep beating. I kept telling myself to breathe. And just as I pop the clip in, next door I hear glass breaking and gunshots. And suddenly

something comes over me, a kind of calm, like it wasn't me but a spirit inside me pulling me over against the closet door, my back flat against it. My kids were so good. They didn't make a sound.

DETECTIVE. The closet door and the door to the hall are side by side.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. So going down that side of the room, you have the closet door—and you're there with your back against it—then the door to the hall, which is blocked by desks. And on the other side of that door, more desks with kids behind them.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. So, if the shooter came through the classroom door you would have been to his right.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. You were ready.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. Waiting for him.

ANNA. Yes.

DETECTIVE. It didn't occur to you to hide with the students?

ANNA. No, I had to protect them.

DETECTIVE. To shoot the gunman.

ANNA. If he came at my kids? Yes.

DETECTIVE. So, after the shots next door, how long before he came in?

ANNA. Forever.

(Actually.)

Maybe thirty seconds before—

(It's too horrible.)