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Dramatic Publishing



Mike's Case

A One-Act Play

By

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Originally published in
Dramatics magazine.



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(MIKE'S CASE)

ISBN 0-87129-689-6

MIKE'S CASE

*A One-Act Play
for Four to Six Men, Three to Seven Women*

CHARACTERS

MIKE a high school student

THE COMPANYhigh school students who have agreed to
.act out some scenes in order to help
.Mike make a point.

TIME: The Present

PLACE: A High School Theater

PRODUCTION NOTES

In the original production of *Mike's Case*, there were no props other than the basic wooden cubes and school chairs. Actors pantomimed all props. There are many places where actual props may be used, such as masks to add to the unreality of the dream sequence, but this is left to the director's discretion.

When the actors play the various roles, different costume pieces should be used to define and clarify each new character portrayed.

SCENE: A high school theater.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The lights come up to reveal a haphazard arrangement of eight wooden cubes, big enough to sit on, and four ordinary school chairs. MIKE enters nervously and looks around the stage.

MIKE (to himself). I hope this is going to work. (He walks downstage and speaks to the audience.) Anyway, I'm glad you could make it, and I hope you won't leave before I'm done because I have a feeling I might not get the chance to do this again because people don't want to hear what I want to say.

VOICE (offstage). That's right, Mike! (Other offstage VOICES try to hush the first VOICE. MIKE did not expect the interruption, but tries to cover.)

MIKE. See what I mean? But I don't mean it's really what I want to say that people don't want to listen to; it's just that people don't ever really listen when other people want to say the *kind* of thing I want to say. (He realizes that he hasn't made himself clear.) Maybe I'd better start again. See, what I want to do is complain, and nobody really listens to complaints, probably because they figure they can't really *do* anything about it anyway. Well, of course they're mostly right. People mainly complain about the only two things that Ben

Franklin said are sure things anyway . . . you know: “These taxes are killing me and I don’t want to die . . .” No wonder nobody listens. So look, I promise I won’t complain about those two things. I don’t even pay taxes yet, and we all know that kids my age don’t think about dying . . . Hell, most of us guys could survive a head-on car crash on excess hormone energy alone! (After a pause.) But I’m getting off the subject. Here’s what I want to complain about. Well, actually, I don’t think it would work to just *tell* you; I think it would work better if I’d *show* you some things that have happened to me . . . and maybe some that haven’t. Then you’ll be able to see what I’m getting at. So, with a little help from my friends, we’ll go back – if you can stand it – to last year at Dwight D. Eisenhower High School.

(The COMPANY enters and sets up a classroom with the blocks and chairs. Two blocks are stacked up to form a podium for MISS FRANKLIN.)

MIKE. It’s Miss Franklin’s class, and we’re well into the second week of the course. We’ll pick it up just before Scott comes into the room – about ten minutes after class has started. Miss Franklin is still trying to get roll taken and Scott is still trying to get a course schedule he can live with. (MIKE takes an unobtrusive position off to the side so that he can watch the classroom action. The STUDENTS pay little attention to MISS FRANKLIN. They talk, joke, and sleep – the usual classroom action and inaction.)

MISS FRANKLIN. Fred Rasmussen.

FRED. Here.

MISS FRANKLIN. Ellen Rossi.

ELLEN. Here.

MISS FRANKLIN. George Rothman.

TIM (after a moment's silence). He died. (The STUDENTS laugh.)

MISS FRANKLIN. That's enough of that.

(SCOTT enters.)

MISS FRANKLIN (noticing SCOTT). Ah, another wandering soul. What can I do for you?

SCOTT. I'm in your class now.

MISS FRANKLIN. Well, if you're going to be in my class, you'd better get used to being punctual. Where have you been?

SCOTT. I was in Guidance. You gotta sign this. (He holds out a class change form.)

MISS FRANKLIN. No, I don't.

SCOTT (not understanding her). They said you had to sign it so I can get in this class.

MISS FRANKLIN. Oh, well, if it'll grace my class with another fine scholar, then of course I'll sign it. (She looks at the paper.)

Uhh . . . I can't do anything with this without your student number. Take it back to Guidance and get your student number on it.

SCOTT. Well, what if I know it? I think I know it.

MISS FRANKLIN. Okay. What is it?

SCOTT. One, four, one, nine.

MISS FRANKLIN. One, four, one, nine, what?

SCOTT. That's it — one, four, one, nine.

MISS FRANKLIN. Wrong. It needs more numbers. It must be one, four, one, nine, something — or something, one, four, one, nine. It can't be just one, four, one, nine.

SCOTT. Yeah, well, one, four, one, nine is in it somewhere.

MISS FRANKLIN. Do you have your I. D. with you?

SCOTT. Yeah, sure, I think I've got it here somewhere. (He searches his pockets, finds the card, and hands it to MISS FRANKLIN.) Here.

MISS FRANKLIN (looking at the card). It doesn't have your

number on it.

SCOTT. It doesn't?

MISS FRANKLIN. No. Why doesn't it have your number on it?

SCOTT. I don't know, man. I just wanted you to sign this so I can get another half-credit so I can graduate on time.

MISS FRANKLIN. Sure, I know. It's just that without your number, I can't get your name on the computer list. Then I have to go back and do it separately and it's a big hassle. But *now* the point is, why doesn't your I.D. have your number on it?

SCOTT. I told you. I don't know. This is the first time I looked at it since I got it.

ELLEN. None of the I.D.'s have student numbers on them. (By now, all of the noise has subsided and the STUDENTS listen to the discussion.)

MISS FRANKLIN. You're kidding!

ELLEN. No. (The other STUDENTS nod their heads in agreement.)

MISS FRANKLIN (to all the STUDENTS). Really? They don't have your student numbers? (There is general agreement among the STUDENTS.) Well, what earthly good are I.D. cards without numbers on them?

SCOTT. Look, I'll go back to Guidance and find out the number.

MISS FRANKLIN. No, it's okay. I can probably figure it out. What year are you in school?

SCOTT. Well, I'm supposed to be a senior, but I'm only a junior.

MISS FRANKLIN. Then . . . looking at the other numbers here, I'd guess that your number probably needs a three in front of it — three, one, four, one, nine.

SCOTT. Right. Yeah. I think that's it.

MISS FRANKLIN. Okay, three, one, four, one, nine. And that's Scott Zinn-shime, right?

SCOTT. No. *Zing-zime*.

MISS FRANKLIN. Sorry. Okay . . . Zing-zime, sit in any empty seat. And next time try to get here on time!

SCOTT. I tried, man. I told you. I was in Guidance trying to get my schedule straightened out! (He starts to leave.)

MISS FRANKLIN. Where are you going?

SCOTT (indicating the form). I've gotta take this back to Guidance.

MISS FRANKLIN. You can do that later. Now you'd better sit down while I finish roll. Then we'll be going over the requirements for your first paper.

SCOTT. But they told me to be sure to bring this back right away.

MISS FRANKLIN. "Right away" is a relative term. You can take it back any time today.

SCOTT. But I don't have any more free periods.

MISS FRANKLIN. Then take it down between classes or after school but, right now, please sit down so you don't miss any more. Okay?

SCOTT. Okay. Where do you want me to sit?

MISS FRANKLIN. Anywhere you can find a seat.

SCOTT. Okay. (He finds a seat and sits down.)

MISS FRANKLIN. Now, where were we? Uh . . . George Samuels. (No response.) George Samuels?

FRED. He died. (The STUDENTS laugh.)

MISS FRANKLIN. Look, that's the third time we've heard that excuse for a joke, and it wasn't funny the first two times either, so let's drop it. Okay? . . . All right . . . Tim Schultz.

TIM. Where? I mean here!

MISS FRANKLIN. Judy Thomas. (No response.)

CAROL. She died. (The STUDENTS laugh.)

MISS FRANKLIN. What am I going to do with you?

MIKE (crossing to C and speaking to the COMPANYY). That'll do, thanks. You can go now. (The COMPANYY rearranges the

the blocks and chairs for the next scene, then exits.)

MIKE (to the audience). I'm afraid that scene didn't really make the point I wanted it to – it's hard to know how these things will come out. It was something about the *atmosphere* in there. It's sort of like what's going on is never really what's going on. Do you see what I mean? (He pauses.) Well, let's try another one. We don't want to stay in school too long, so we'll join some others with the same ideas. They're over in Sweeney Park, about a block from school.

(As MIKE speaks, the COMPANY enters. They take their places for the park scene, each wearing a single, distinctive costume piece such as a hat or vest. MIKE steps to the side to observe.)

MARY. Bored. God, I'm bored!

JUNE. Yeah.

MARY. If I was any more bored, I'd be dead.

ANN. Yeah, me, too.

MARY. I'm almost as bored as in English class.

LISA. Yuch! It can't be that bad.

MARY. You're right. Nothing is as boring as Fishy Fisher. (She makes a face, imitating the teacher.)

LISA. You think he'll turn us in for cutting his class?

MARY. He probably won't notice. He can't see more than three feet past that stupid grammar book.

ANNE (to the BOYS, who sit a little apart). Hey! What're you guys cutting out of?

RANDY. Algebra.

PAUL. History.

TONY. Nothin'. I'm free this hour. Then I've got two lunch hours.

ANN. You're lucky. Any of you guys got a car?

RANDY. Would we be here if we did?