

Dustin: *(Almost like a little kid who is afraid of a storm)* Is it still raining outside?

Detective Helms: Yes. Yes, it is...

Detective Helms: *(To audience)* When I went out into the waiting room, Dustin's parents were there trying to console Tommy's parents. I spoke with the four of them, and I told them what happened. Since then, Tommy's parents—after some serious deliberation—have decided *not* to press 1st Degree murder charges against Dustin. They've spoken with their lawyer and have decided to lower the charges against Dustin to 'unintentional manslaughter' on one condition. They want Dustin to be placed in a home for mentally disabled young adults—somewhere where Dustin can be among his peers—young men his own age. They feel that—at the same time—it will better for Dustin to have around-the-clock supervision; thereby, hopefully *eliminating* the possibility of a tragedy like this from ever happening again. *(Looking back at Dustin sitting in the interrogation room)* Dustin—may the force be with you, my friend. *(Beat)* May the force be with you.



A FORENSICS ANTHOLOGY

Edited By Gregory T. Burns



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star lit

volume eight
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Burns, Gregory et al.

star lit volume eight
bright literature for bright performers

Humorous Interpretation
Dramatic Interpretation
Duo Interpretation
Poetry Interpretation
Prose Interpretation

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sky was moving in circles. I lay down on my back—and just looked up at the clouds. I told Tommy to do the same thing. I told him to look at this one cloud and tell me what he thought it looked like. There was this one cloud—and it looked like it was a *dragon*—with fire coming out of its mouth and everything.

Detective Helms: What did Tommy think it looked like?

Dustin: Tommy didn't say anything. He was quiet. Real quiet. I looked over at Tommy, and he was just lying there. Still. He didn't move or say anything. I got up, and his body looked all—well, his head and neck—they looked all *crooked*. I started to yell at him. I said, "Tommy, get up. Get up, and tell me what that cloud looks like to you. Okay? Get up! Get up, Tommy!!" His eyes were shut, and his head was all twisty. There was a little bit of blood coming out of Tommy's mouth. I think he must have bit his tongue or something.

Detective Helms: What did you do then, Dustin?

Dustin: I told Tommy to wait there. I would run home and get a Band-Aid. My mom says anytime you have a cut—*or*—or are *bleeding*—you need to get a Band-Aid on it as *fast* as you can.

Detective Helms: Did you go home and get Tommy a Band-Aid?

Dustin: Well, I put on my shoes, and it looked like it was going to rain. So I grabbed Tommy's shoes, too. I didn't want his new shoes to get wet. So I ran home to get a Band-Aid for Tommy. Then Mom started *yelling* at me. She said that I didn't finish my chores, and that I couldn't leave until they were finished. I tried to tell her about Tommy, but she *wouldn't listen* to me. After I vacuumed the living room, it was getting dark. I told Mom I had to go give Tommy a Band-Aid, but she said it was too late for me to leave the house. She said that Tommy's a big boy, and she's sure his mother already gave him one by now. Mom said she was going to make me a TV dinner, and then I could go read one of my comic books before bed. Then you rang our doorbell. You said you needed to talk to my mom and dad for a minute, and then Mom told me to go to my room. I went in there and started to read my new Thor comic book. It's really a good one. Then Mom came back to my room. She said we had to go somewhere for a little bit. Then she looked on my dresser and saw Tommy's shoes. She said we'd better take those with us. Then we came here. (*Pause*) Is everything okay? (*Slowly, and genuinely concerned about his friend*) Is Tommy okay? Did his mother give him a Band-Aid?

Detective Helms: (*Long Pause*) Dustin, I want to thank you for being so honest with me here tonight. You—you obviously really like your friends. I can tell by talking with you—that you—you really *try*—to be a good friend, too. Listen, I need to talk to your parents for a few minutes. I'll get one of the guys up front to see if they can't rustle you up something to eat. It appears my coming to your house tonight interrupted your dinner. So sit there, and hold tight for a bit. Okay? (*Dustin simply nods.*)

in a vacant lot a few blocks away. Tell me about that lot where you boys play.

Dustin: There's this empty lot a couple of streets over. It's at the end of the street, and the house beside it's empty, too. A couple of old people lived there, but then the old man died. After the old man died, my dad said the old lady's daughter came and got her; so nobody lives there anymore.

Detective Helms: What do you boys *do there*—when you play in the vacant lot?

Dustin: Sometimes, we go there and play baseball. We don't ever have enough players though. So mainly, we just hit the ball around.

Detective Helms: What about this afternoon? Were you guys playing baseball there earlier?

Dustin: We *went* there to play baseball. But then Jarod said he wanted to play martial arts.

Detective Helms: How do you play—*martial arts*?

Dustin: We pretend we're the guys on TV—the ones who fight in a cage. We were all there, and Vin said he'd take on Jarod. So Tommy and I sat on an old stump, while Vin and Jarod grabbed each other in choke holds and stuff. Jarod's pretty strong though, and Vin just kept tapping out.

Detective Helms: Did you participate?

Dustin: When it was time for Tommy and me to do *our* martial arts, Vin's mother came to get him. She said it was time for Vin to go home and eat. Then Jarod said he'd probably better get home, too. That just left me and Tommy.

Detective Helms: Did Tommy stay with you? Or did he have to go home, too?

Dustin: Tommy said, "Come on, Thor. Show me what you've got!" Sometimes, he calls me Thor. I like that. I like it—when Tommy does that. I was glad I was going to get to be Thor. Thor's my favorite *Avenger*, and he's a good guy. I told Tommy that I knew I was bigger than him, so I wouldn't be too rough on him.

Detective Helms: What did Tommy say?

Dustin: (*Begins to smile.*) He just laughed and said he trusted me. But then he said a *real* martial arts guy would just go for it. Then Tommy said we should take off our shoes, like the real martial arts guys do on TV. So we took off our shoes, and Tommy put his Thor sneakers by this tree. At first, we were just horsing around. I would grab Tommy by the waist and lift him in the air. He'd twist and turn and try to get away from me, but I would just spin him in circles. Spin and turn. Spin and turn. I could tell Tommy was getting dizzy, because I know *I* was getting dizzy. I decided to throw him to the ground. So I spun around three times as fast as I could, and then I let go of him. I fell to the ground, and I was laughing. My head was spinning, and then when I looked up—it looked like the

Timeline's Prime Time Special: *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* (EXPOSED!)

By Gregory T. Burns



Feeling Like Cinderella

By Kendra Sparks



Missing Michael

By Leo Cannon



Another Teenage Cliché

By Gregory T. Burns



It's Not About the Hair

By Bridget Grace Sheaff



Dustin

By Leo Cannon

NOTES

Everyone loves a good story, and perhaps no one has the ability to make a story even more sensational than primetime journalists. In his mature, over-the-top satire of primetime news programs, playwright Gregory T. Burns takes a birds-eye view of a fictitious primetime news program, *Timeline's Primetime Special*, whose primary goal is to boost ratings through capitalizing on the misfortune of others. This selection may be performed by a male or a female and be entered in Humorous Interpretation; however, with creative blocking, this play may also be performed by two actors and be entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting. If used in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting, the performers may choose to divide the 'hosting' duties of Mike 'The Milker' Monahan by adding a second on-air journalist. The performance style of this play is similar to that of a bad soap opera; therefore, don't be afraid to really over-exaggerate the 'clips' from the fictitious children's show, *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*. Remember, much of the humor from children's shows stems from the, at times, uncomfortably long pauses, as Ann and Armando wait for the viewers at home to interact with their various rhetorical questions. For those performers looking for a zany comedy that takes a dark look at how we, as a society, are captivated by sensationalistic journalism, you've come to the right place! Now, go for it!

Characters:

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan, a TV journalist

Ann, the young co-host of a children's show

Armando, the young co-host of a children's show

Diane, a mother who recently lost her daughter

Debbie, Diane's sister

Hank, Diane's husband

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: For generations, Americans have *grown up*—watching educational children's programming. And for most Americans, these seemingly innocent "Kiddie Shows" have taught us how to *read—and write*—and in some cases—even how to tie our *shoes*. They've taught us how to build *character*. And—over the years—the *stars* on these shows have—well, become our *friends*. Tonight, on this *Timeline Primetime Special*, we'll go *undercover*—and show you how one, seemingly innocent children's show—had the power to ultimately *destroy* a woman's *life*—and the lives of her family—one, unsuspecting *victim* at

said I was weird, and that all I cared about was comic books. They would always tell me that I was stupid. *They* were the ones that were *stupid*. They both wore *Hello Kitty* clothes. And they'd pretend to be all *smart* and everything, just because they'd finish all of their worksheets before I could finish mine. The teachers would take the three of us on field trips and stuff, but I never liked going to those places.

Detective Helms: I remember *my* days in school. I always loved going on field trips. I remember this one time our school took us to this ocean-like aquarium. It was the first time I'd seen a shark up close. It was—(*Remembering fondly*) It was just so majestic, you know? Do you like sharks, Dustin?

Dustin: No.

Detective Helms: Why not?

Dustin: When I was little, I saw the movie, *Jaws*. That's why I don't like to swim. This one time, at school, they took us to this big swimming pool. I would just sit on the steps and put my feet in the water.

Detective Helms: Did the other kids swim? On your field trip?

Dustin: They couldn't swim either, so mainly they just paddled around on their stupid *Hello Kitty* floats.

Detective Helms: So—you didn't like going on any of your class field trips?

Dustin: Most of the time—no.

Detective Helms: Where else would your school take you?

Dustin: They'd just take us to places like the grocery store. They'd show us how to put things in our carts. I would just look at them like, "Are you serious? You don't think I know how to shop? They would say things like, "Dustin, if you wanted some cookies, what would you do if you were at the store?" Sometimes, I would mess with them, and I would pretend I didn't understand what they were talking about. (*Starts laughing*) It was funny. The teachers would be like, "Dustin, you're at the store. You want some cookies. You go down the cookie aisle. You *see* the cookies you want. Now, what do you do?" I would just stand there—looking at the cookies—then I would look back at them like, "Uhhmm, I'm not sure. Can you show me again?" I know they were teachers, but I don't think they were the smartest ones in our school. I think that's why they had three teachers for the three of us. It all sort of evened out, I guess.

Detective Helms: Was high school better for you?

Dustin: I didn't go to high school. My mom and dad thought I could learn enough at home, so my mom buys me lots of comic books to read and stuff.

Detective Helms: Is that your favorite thing to do? Read comic books?

Dustin: No. My favorite part of the day is when Tommy and Jarrod and Vin get home from school, so we can play outside.

Detective Helms: Your parents mentioned that you boys sometimes play

Or I have to be the bad guy. I don't like being the bad guy. I always want to be the good guy.

Detective Helms: Where do you boys play, Dustin? Do you ever play at *your* house?

Dustin: Mostly we play outside. There are lots of cool places to play outside in our neighborhood. And there's even a park a few streets over that has a trail. Sometimes we go on the trail and pretend to have adventures.

Detective Helms: Sounds like all of you have a great time together. Do you guys ever get into any fights?

Dustin: We're all friends, so we never fight. Not fight for real, anyway. Sometimes, we wrestle around, but mainly it's Tommy and Jarod. They say I'm too big, so they make me be the referee.

Detective Helms: Do you...*like* being the referee?

Dustin: I'd rather be one of the guys wrestling, but I'm older. So I guess it makes sense for me to be the referee.

Detective Helms: Do you boys ever play at Tommy's house?

Dustin: Yes.

Detective Helms: What about Jarod's house? Do you boys ever hang out over *there*?

Dustin: Sometimes, we hang out at Jarod's house, and we watch those guys on TV do martial arts. We never go to Vin's house though. His mother doesn't want us to mess up her house. But that's okay, because Jarod's house has a big TV in the living room. It makes the guys on TV look like they're fighting right there in the room with us. We always root for the same guy. Tommy says he's going to be a famous fighter someday, and he's going to be on TV. I asked him, if he gets famous and gets to fight on TV—if I can come and be the referee. He says he doesn't know, but he thinks they already have one. Then he pointed to the TV screen, and he was right. They already had a referee. So I told him that I'll come and be the guy who hands him a towel at the end of every round. Tommy said, "It's a deal." And then we shook on it.

Detective Helms: It sounds like you and Tommy— It sounds like you two boys are pretty good friends.

Dustin: We're *best* friends. He's been my best friend ever since he moved into my neighborhood.

Detective Helms: How old was Tommy when he first moved near you?

Dustin: I'm not sure. I think he was starting kindergarten. I was in middle school.

Detective Helms: Did you—*like* school?

Dustin: No. I didn't like middle school.

Detective Helms: Why not, Dustin? What didn't you like about it?

Dustin: All of the other kids got to go to all of these different classes with different teachers. I had to stay in the same room all day with these other two kids. They were both girls, and they didn't like me very much. They

a time. I'm your host, Mike 'The Milker' Monahan. They call me 'The Milker'—because there's not a journalist on television—who can 'milk' a moment like I can. *(Beat)* So won't you join me, as we *exploit*—yet another American tragedy that will ultimately make you feel *better*—and more *normal*—about your own lives? *(Beat)* If so, then join me—as we EXPOSE: *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando!*



Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Tonight, we ask the question: Can a children's television show—literally *destroy*—a family? The answer—might surprise you. *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* began airing just two short years ago. Recently, the parent company, W.T.F., Incorporated—announced plans to *renew* the disgustingly, trashy series and have declined all interviews for tonight's *Timeline Primetime Special*. So, we've decided we'd like you—our viewers at home—probably sitting at home wrapped up in a *Snuggie*—to see *first-hand*—how a children's show—could have the power—to bring a family to its knees. *(Beat)* It's time to EXPOSE—one of America's biggest blemishes—*The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*. So, are Ann and Armando—doing more *harm*—than *good*? You be the judge. Let's take a look at this sham—that has the audacity to call itself a children's show.

(A clip from the show plays on the television)

Ann: Hola, friends! My name is Ann. It's short for *Annoying*.

Armando: Good morning, amigos! My name is Armando. It's short for—

Ann: *(Interrupting Armando)* No one cares, okay? Moving on. Would you like to come on an adventure with us? Adventures are fun.

Armando: What? You can come, but you'll have to ask your parents first?

Ann: No, don't do that. Your parents want you to be more independent. They want you to make decisions on your own. Can you say 'emancipation'? So, don't ask for their permission. Just come. It will be all right.

Armando: If you're worried you'll get in trouble, leave your parents a note. Get a piece of paper and write, "I'm going to El Salvador with Ann and Armando. If I don't get killed by militant rebels, I'll be back when I'm back."

Ann: What? You don't know how to spell El Salvador? Neither do we, so just write, "Love you. Bye." Then they won't worry.

Armando: They'll probably just call the police and put out an all-points bulletin on you. And your name and physical description will appear on electronic billboards across the state. You'll be famous!

Ann: So come on, we're about to magically appear in El Salvador. Just as

soon as we snap our fingers. (*Snap fingers*)

Armando: Look! We're in El Salvador!

Ann: Look at all the poor people.

Armando: They are poor, because they don't have any money.

Ann: Money is important. Make sure you always have money, because you may want to buy something—like a souvenir from El Salvador.

Armando: Or illegal drugs. Oh, wait. Drugs are only illegal in America. Well, in most states they are. Can you say, 'medicinal purposes'?

Ann: Here they are like candy. You like candy, don't you?

Armando: But illegal drugs cost money—just like candy costs money.

Ann: So, if you want some, you'll have to have money.

Armando: Money is power.

Ann: Did you know that there is a symbol for money?

Armando: What is the symbol, Ann?

Ann: Well, Armando, the symbol for money is called—a dollar sign!

Armando: A dollar sign?

Ann: Yes! Do you know what the dollar sign looks like? It is a big capital "S" with a line going through the top and coming out the bottom. Would you like to make the sign with us?

Armando: Let's make the sign together. Okay?

Ann: Quick! Make more dollar signs! Make lots and lots of dollar signs as fast as you can!

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Well, viewers, that doesn't seem so "innocent" to me. Of course, it *seemed* innocent—to the under-educated, viewing audience possibly like you there at home—lounging on the couch in your cute little Snuggies. (*Beat*) But I want you to ask yourselves—what was this show's educational purpose? Honestly, as we review this "kids" show, we can't seem to find one educational or redeeming quality. Could a children's show like *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* be a *training video* used to recruit future *gang members and criminals*? Could a T.V. show marketed to *toddlers*—be teaching your children how to make—*gang signs*? Well, I know one devastated mother—who seems to believe the answer to that question is—yes. Yes, they can.. (*Beat*) Meet Diane. (*The camera zooms in on Diane's face*) Poor, poor, sad and grieving Diane, what goes through your tortured and regret-filled *mind*—when you see that clip?

Diane: (*Hesitantly*) I feel sad. I really do. When I watch that clip—I see two little mean-spirited children—Ann and Armando—two little *hooligans*—who constantly undermine parental *authority*—teaching *other* children things that could get them—

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Killed? Murdered? Mutilated?

Diane: (*Long pause*) Yes.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Let's talk about your very dead daughter,

His parents had a big party for him in their backyard. We all went over to Tommy's house, when Tommy's dad got off work. His dad made hamburgers on their grill. He made hot dogs, too, but nobody really ate any of the hot dogs. Everybody wanted a hamburger. His dad is nice. He always messes with my hair, when I come over to Tommy's house. He's a teacher. He teaches at the high school. He's always trying to teach me something, when I go over there.

Detective Helms: Were all of the neighborhood boys at Tommy's house for his birthday party?

Dustin: Everyone was there, except for Vin. Vin's mom wouldn't let him come. She said he had to help her clean the house or something. Vin's mom likes a clean house. That's why we never get to play over there.

Detective Helms: Did Tommy get lots of presents at his birthday party?

Dustin: Sure. He got lots of stuff. Tommy's parents bought him a new shirt and some shoes.

Detective Helms: What kind of shoes were they?

Dustin: They were sneakers. They had a picture of Thor on them. Thor's my favorite *Avenger*. Tommy really liked them.

Detective Helms: Thor's very popular. My son likes Thor, too. So, what did you think of Tommy's new shoes? Did you like them, too?

Dustin: I thought they were the coolest pair of sneakers I've ever seen.

Detective Helms: Did *you* bring Tommy a present?

Dustin: My mom forgot to get me a present to take, so I looked around my room for something to give Tommy. He's my best friend, and I didn't want to go to his party and not have a present for him. I gave him one of my action figures. It was The Hulk. The Hulk was missing one of his hands, but Tommy said it was cool anyway. He said he would just pretend The Hulk was born that way.

Detective Helms: Sounds like you boys had a great party for your friend. I'll bet all of you boys have a lot of fun together. Don't you? What do you boys play—when you get together?

Dustin: We're always playing something. Sometimes, we play with our action figures. We're pretty rough sometimes. We'll throw them way up in the air and pretend they're flying. That's how The Hulk that I gave Tommy for his birthday lost his hand. I threw him way up high in the air, and when he landed on the street—his hand broke off. When it happened, Tommy said we should pretend he was flying and some airplane propeller chopped it off. Tommy's funny. He's got a good imagination.

Detective Helms: Action figures can be a lot of fun. What else do you guys do when you get together? Do you play any other games?

Dustin: Sometimes, we'll pretend we're cops and robbers. And sometimes, we'll play Superheroes. I don't like that game as much though. I always want to be a Superhero, too, but Tommy and Jarod and Vin say I'm too big to be a Superhero. So I have to be the monster from outer space.

fied their son. His name was Tommy. They tell me that they’ve been looking for their son after he didn’t come home for dinner. The mother then gives me a few names, addresses—boys he might have played with earlier. I talked with one family, who said the last person seen with Tommy was his friend—Dustin.

The following scene takes place in an interrogation room at a police station.

Detective Helms: Hello, Dustin, I’m Detective Helms. I just met with your parents, and I told them you and I would have our little chat in here. It’s a little cramped, but it will give us a little more privacy. So, let’s get started, shall we? *(Turns on a tape recorder)* Could you start by telling me your name?

Dustin: *(Innocently)* You already know my name. You said hello to me, when you walked in the room.

Detective Helms: I know your name, Dustin. I just need to hear *you* say your name. *(Pointing to the tape recorder)* For the record. So, state your name for me, please.

Dustin: My name is Dustin.

Detective Helms: What’s your *last* name?

Dustin: Farmington. I’m Dustin Farmington.

Detective Helms: How old are you, Dustin?

Dustin: I’m nineteen-years-old.

Detective Helms: Where do you live?

Dustin: I live with my parents. We’ve lived in the same house since before I was born. Only then, it was just my mom and my dad. I wasn’t born yet.

Detective Helms: For the record, can you tell me what your address is?

Dustin: 1612 Maple. I’ve got my own room and everything. It’s decorated with posters of the *Avengers*, but I’ve also got some old *Star Wars* stuff that used to be my dad’s. He gave it to me, when I was little.

Detective Helms: *(Laughs)* I have to admit. I’m a huge *Star Wars* fan myself.

Dustin: I *really* like Dad’s old comic books. I like all the bright colors they use.

Detective Helms: Do you— Do you have any *friends* in your neighborhood?

Dustin: I’ve got lots of friends. They like comic books, too. There’s Tommy. And there’s Jarod. Sometimes Vin gets to play with us, too, but he’s Chinese. His mother makes him stay home a lot, so sometimes he can’t play with us.

Detective Helms: How old are your friends, Dustin?

Dustin: I’m not sure how old they are. I know that Tommy just turned eleven, because he just had a birthday last week. I got to go to his party.

Jessica, for a moment. Shall we?

Diane: I know everyone thinks that their child is—*special*—and *smart*, but Jessica really was. She was—*special*—and *smart*.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: *(Calmly, as if not to upset her)* Diane, I’m holding a copy of dead Jessica’s recent progress report—illegally obtained by our research staff and producers—from the *night* custodian at Jessica’s pre-school.

Diane: *(Braving a smile)* She was so proud the day she brought that progress report out to the car.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: And now she will never be proud of anything again—ever. May I—may I share it—with our viewers at home?

Diane: Please, do.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: *(Holding the progress report up for the viewers at home, but not really looking at it)* I’m *looking* at this, and I must say—your dead daughter, Jennifer...

Diane: Jessica!

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Excuse me. You dead daughter, *Jessica*, seemed to excel in almost *every category* in pre-school.

Diane: *(Proudly)* She loved—she loved *learning*.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: It’s impressive. It—*really* is. *(Looking at Jessica’s progress report)* Reading: a *check mark*. Math: a *check mark*. Writing: *another check mark*.

Diane: *(Fighting back the tears)* And she was *smart*. Jessica was—*smart*.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: And now she’s *gone*. She’s—she’s now the *late*, Jessica. She’s the *Jessica* you’ll never get to ask again whether she’d like “*Fruit Loops or Frosted Flakes*” on her morning cereal. *(Beat)* Diane—what did the *late*—darling, little *Jessica*—your *deceased* daughter—like to *do*?

Diane: *(Trying to be brave)* She loved, loved, *loved* her morning television programs.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Even at the tender age of *four*?

Diane: *(Shaking her head vehemently up and down to form a ‘yes’)* Yes. *(Proudly)* Even though she was only in pre-school, Jessica was already reading at a *third-grade* level.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: *(Waving his notes in the air and above his head, clearly not looking at his notes)* I’m looking at my notes, and I see that—your *dead* daughter, the little girl whose *lifeless* body you found outside on your screened-in front porch—your *only* child—the *late* Jessica—I’m sorry. *(Attempting to look upset, milking his emotions)* I don’t want to capitalize on the *grief*—you and your family must be *feeling* right now, so I’ll just call her—the little girl who’s never—ever—*never* going to come home again and say, ‘*Mommy, I can’t tell you how much I love your home-made chocolate chip cookies. They’re a tickle party in my tummy.*’

Diane: *(Gently nodding her head ‘yes’)* She did love my home-made

chocolate chip cookies.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: (*Nodding in agreement*) Sadly, you can’t give home-made chocolate chip cookies—to a *corpse*. (*Waiting for a response*) Can you? (*Still waiting for a response*) Can you, Diane? (*Determined to get a response from Diane*) You CAN’T give home-made chocolate chip cookies to a CORPSE! Now, CAN YOU?

Diane: (*Shocked, but somehow manages to respond*) No. No, you can’t.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: (*Calmly, but again not looking down at his clipboard*) I’m—I’m looking over these notes, and I must ask you. Is it *true* that Jessica—she spent up to *seven hours a day* watching children’s educational programming?

Diane: Well, I never had a problem with her spending so much time in front of the television, because it seemed to be—you know—teaching her *so much*. (*She starts to break down.*)

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Let’s go back in time—to the day of the *tragedy*. That morning started out just like any other. Didn’t it?

Diane: Yes. Yes, it did.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Diane, if you can—*please*—tell the folks at home. *Where* was your daughter that morning? (*Beat*) *Where* was Jessica that *morning*—that morning when she was still *alive*.

Diane: Well, as I think we’ve clearly established—she was on the front porch. My husband had the porch screened-in a couple of years ago. That way Jessica could sit out there, breathe in the fresh air and watch her morning shows. She liked her programs so much—that we had a TV put in every room of our house—including the front porch.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Diane, please—tell our viewers at home—what happened on the morning your daughter tragically and horribly became food for worms!

Diane: Well, Jessica was watching *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*—like always. I remember that on the show that day—they were going to El Salvador. They do that sort of thing. You know, go places. They’re always traveling to far-away locations.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: And how do they—*do* that? (*Clarifying for the viewers at home*) These days, air fares are *expensive*.

Diane: Well, they would *travel*—by snapping their *fingers*. This particular episode was—as all of you at home just *saw*—teaching children how to make a ‘dollar sign’ in the air using their fingers.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Do you think Jessica followed the *directions* given to her—by Ann and Armando that morning?

Diane: Yes. I’m *positive* she was making the gestures for the dollar sign, because just moments earlier—through the living room window—I saw her *snapping* her fingers. So I opened the front door and asked her where she was that day. And she said, “*Mommy, today I’m in El Salvador.*”

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: And then what did *you* say?

NOTES

Dustin is a one-act play about bad things happening to good people. The title character, Dustin, is a 19-year-old, mentally-challenged young man, who, for lack of companionship, finds comfort and acceptance while playing with pre-teen boys from his neighborhood. Unfortunately, tragedy soon becomes inevitable, and Dustin finds himself being interrogated by a detective at the police station. The questioning centers on the death of his friend, Tommy. The character, Detective Helms, may be portrayed by either a male or female adept at portraying maturity; however, the character, Dustin, *must* be portrayed by a male. This selection may be entered in either Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting. By completely eliminating Detective Helms from the scene, however, this play could easily be adapted into a monologue and be entered in Dramatic Interpretation. This is an incredibly strong, realistic scene for two mature performers. Please, remember that an interrogation involves carefully executed questions. Do not underestimate the power that lies within a few carefully placed pauses for dramatic effect. Also, avoid the stereotype of over-playing Dustin’s mental challenges. Instead, play him honestly. His mindset is that of a young boy; however, his body is very much that of a grown man. There is humor within this play. Always remember: Nothing draws an audience into a character’s journey more effectively than playing a few lighter moments along the way. Think about it. An audience is always more likely to be truly moved, touched, and ultimately, *root* for you, if you first make them *like* the character; so play that innocence and likeability. Make the audience giggle a few times at Dustin’s innocent nature and purity of heart. With two mature, talented performers, and some true soul-searching, *Dustin* is a sure-fire winner!

Detective Helms: (*To audience*) The hardest part about being a detective—is learning the truth sometimes. I’ve been in this business a while now, and many of the stories I’ve heard would rival anything you’ve ever seen in the movies or on television. Take tonight, for instance. We get a call from one of the officers doing a routine drive through in one of the neighborhoods over on the west side of town. There was a young boy, eleven-years-old—*dead*—found lying in an empty lot. I got the call and immediately drove over. The boy’s parents arrived just after paramedics were putting the boy’s body into the ambulance. They immediately identi-

all of her hair. This is definitely a self-inflicted haircut. It just sort of lies there, completely uneven, but one thing is for certain. Emily's long hair is gone.)

Emily: *(Standing there, waiting for Samantha to see her new haircut)* Well...

Samantha: *(Without turning around)* Mom was on the phone.

Emily: What did she say?

Samantha: *(Turning now)* She said... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Emily: I told you that you weren't alone.

Samantha: *(Shocked)* You're a lunatic!

Emily: I just thought I would shake things up around here. *(Beat)* Now it's me who wants to be like you!

Samantha: *(Hesitantly)* Emily, I'm not sick!

Emily: *(She freezes, as though she didn't hear correctly)* What?

Samantha: The doctor just called Mom. It seems they got my blood samples mixed up with someone else's. *(Beat)* I have mono. Isn't that great!

Emily: *(Beat)* How does that even happen?

Samantha: *(Beat)* Well, let's see. I could have gotten it from Carlie, after we shared that soda at the mall—or it could have been when I was making out with Christopher at Sherry's party last month—

Emily: *(Cutting her off)* No, I *know* how mono is contracted, silly. I mean...*this*... How do two sisters who, when they woke up this morning...had two beautiful heads of hair... And now...*this*—

(They both walk over to the large mirror hanging on the wall. They stand there staring at their almost identical haircuts)

Emily: *(Softly, as if she is still in shock)* Wow...

Samantha: I know.

Emily: MY HAIR!

Samantha: I know.

Emily: What am I going to do?

Samantha: *(Smiling)* It will grow back. It'll take some time, but eventually it will grow back. And before you go off and do something impulsive again, I think it would be in your best interest if the next time—you should consult me before doing anything drastic like this.

Emily: *(Laughing)* Oh, shut up!

Samantha: I can't believe you did that.

Emily: I was trying to be nice. Obviously that backfired.

Samantha: No. No, it didn't. I love you, Emily. You're the best older sister a girl could have.

Emily: *(Beat)* You'd better love me. *(Beat)* I just cut off all of my hair... because you *didn't* have cancer.

(They begin to laugh in succession. Each one laughing makes the other one laugh again.)

Diane: I said, "That's nice, but remember—El Salvador is a third world country. *(Finally losing it)* Be careful."

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: *(Repeating Diane's last words for emphasis)* Be—*careful*. Little did you know, Diane—just how *prophetic* those two last words—spoken to your now extremely *dead daughter*—would become.

Diane: *(Composing herself in order to finish her story)* Apparently, there were two boys from a *gang* walking by—and they noticed my daughter practicing her little gestures for the 'dollar sign' that Ann and Armando had just shown her on their *Amazing Adventures* show. The gang members—they *thought*—they thought Jessica was making *gang signals*—and they *shot* her.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Diane, you may be interested to know that since the morning your daughter was *fatally*—*savagely*—and *brutally* gunned down—right here in 'white picket fence' America—

Diane: *(Interjecting quickly)* Our fence is brown.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Our *investigative team* has learned that the symbols used for making that 'dollar sign' on *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*—are *eerily* similar to those gestures used by gang members taunting *rival* gangs. That morning, your daughter may have *thought* she was innocently making a dollar sign—but in *reality*—she was saying, "*I want to get with your sisters—and be nasty.*"

Diane: *(Truly shocked)* I—I didn't *know* that.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: As we're unraveling this mystery of—who's to *blame* for your daughter's *death*—there are two things that strike me as particularly—*unlikely*. One: That Jessica *knew* the sisters of the two gang members who were walking down your sidewalk that morning and *viciously* gunned her down. *(Beat)* And provided—the two young gang members who took away your only reason for *living* even HAD sisters—that *two*: They thought your daughter—at age four—was strongly showing signs of being interested in other—life choices—deemed—*unnatural* in over three dozen states.

Diane: *(Defending her daughter's heterosexuality)* No, Jessica definitely liked *boys*. She was *always* flirting with some little boy at the playground. She did that, because she was—you know—*special*.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: *(Beat)* And smart. Don't forget. Jessica is, excuse me, I mean *was*—smart. *(Beat)* If there's *one* thing you'd like to come from all of this—if there's one *positive* thing—what would you like people to take away from your personal tragedy?

Diane: *(Taking her time and thinking about what she would like Jessica's legacy to be, she pulls out a glossy, laminated copy of her recipe for chocolate chip cookies and puts on a happy, salesman-like face)* I'd like the viewers at home—to send \$9.99 to me at my home address. And in return—I'll send *you*—a glossy, laminated copy of Jessica's favorite

snack—my home-made chocolate chip cookies—AND—I'll tell you my secret recipe that makes these cookies—*special*—like Jessica. *(Beat, a more serious tone now)* So, if your child *wasn't* killed while watching a kiddie TV show—then make *your* children homemade chocolate chip cookies as *often* as you can. *(Beat)* Because you never *know*—when it will be your child's last—*batch*.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: *(Holding for dramatic effect)* Diane, you may not find comfort in these words right now—but *I hope for you*—that *somewhere* —Jessica is looking down on us—possibly in the skies over *El Salvador*—and saying to herself, “You guys sure are making me *thirsty*—for a tall glass of *milk*.”

Diane: *(Pleased with Skeeter's thoughtfulness)* That sounds like something Jessica would say, because she is, I mean *was*—*special*—and *smart*.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: One would *think*—losing a daughter to gang violence would be difficult *enough*. But as you'll see in this *next* segment—Diane's family *nightmare*—was only just beginning. *(Beat)* On March 3rd, Diane's sister, Debbie, took her only son, Trevor, to the City Zoo. Trevor loves animals, and Debbie thought it would be a golden opportunity to take a few photos of her son standing in front of the animals' cages. Now, sadly, there's *one picture* Debbie can't get out of her mind. It's the image of her son, Trevor, being *torn apart*—*literally*—by the zoo's newest acquisition, an albino mongoose. At our producer's request, we've had our camera crew distort Debbie's face, because she's simply too *ugly* for primetime TV. Here's Debbie in her own words.

Debbie: I took Trevor to the zoo, because he wanted to see the new albino mongoose. Trevor's been wanting to see a mongoose in person—ever since he saw one on that terrible children's show, *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*. There's apparently an animated mongoose named Marty that Ann and Armando take with them from time-to-time on their ridiculous adventures to third world countries. *(Collecting herself)* Well, once we got to the mongoose exhibit at the zoo, Trevor ran away from me and somehow slipped into its cage. I screamed for him to come back, but Trevor just turned around and said, “Mom, Marty the Mongoose is the friendliest animal in the world!” *(Beat)* Well, all I can say—is that mongoose was no longer *albino* once it finished *mauling* my son. No sir, that mongoose was *red*—*blood* red.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: After 7,000 stitches and two reconstructive surgeries, Debbie's son, Trevor, is now a dead-ringer for the Hollywood iconic movie monster, *Frankenstein*. And Trevor's medical bills have taken a huge toll on Debbie's household budget. Now, Debbie's family is as poor as the orphaned children—Ann and Armando so gleefully visit in third world countries around the globe. *(Beat)* Two months later—on May 5th—when many people were celebrating their *Cinco's*—and their

Emily: I guessed that.

Samantha: You were way better than I was.

Emily: But you were better at the piano.

Samantha: That's only because you have tiny hands.

Emily: I do not!

Samantha: Baby hands.

(They are both laughing again. Slowly, they stop and sit in silence.)

Samantha: I'm scared, Emily.

Emily: I know.

Samantha: I don't want to die.

Emily: You're not going to die.

Samantha: I want to be able to go to college. Like you.

Emily: You are going to go to college. And you are going to go to football games with your friends, and order pizza at one o'clock in the morning, and fail at *least* one French test... *(Beat)* And you are going to break some guys heart with your short haircut and your can-do attitude.

Samantha: Emily, I don't think I can do this.

Emily: You won't be by yourself. There are so many people that love you, okay?

Samantha: Okay.

Emily: Like me.

Samantha: Right.

Emily: I mean that, Sammie.

Samantha: I know that you do.

Emily: So, what do you want to do? Are you hungry? Do you want to get something to eat?

Samantha: Not really.

Emily: Do you want to watch a movie?

Samantha: I don't think so.

Emily: Come on. You shouldn't just sit here and wallow. *(Beat)* We should get up. Do something.

Samantha: I already did something today. I cut all of my hair off.

Emily: Sure. We could do something even *more* impulsive like... bowling.

Samantha: Bowling? Are you serious? You think bowling is impulsive?

Emily: *(Beat)* I'm not as good at the whole 'impulsive' thing as you are.

Samantha: Okay. I know. Let's just get in the car and see what happens.

Emily: Great. I'll go get ready.

(EMILY exits as the phone rings. SAMANTHA answers it.)

Samantha: Hello? Hey, Mom. I'm okay. I think... Mom, what's wrong?

(Beat) And...then what did he say? *(Beat)* Really? How does that even happen? That's awful. I mean, I know, Mom. No, no, I'm fine. I'm... I'm going to sit down for a while. I'm fine, Mom. Really, I am. Okay? *(Beat)* I'm going to go tell Emily. Yeah, we've been talking. Okay. I love you, too. *(Beat)* I know, I know...me, too. *(Beat)* Okay, Mom. Bye.

(SAMANTHA hangs up, as EMILY enters. Impulsively, EMILY has cut off

Samantha: I can't deal with this.

Emily: No one wants to deal with something like this, Sam, but we'll get through it...together.

Samantha: This isn't supposed to happen to 17-year-olds! I'm not supposed to be worried about stuff like this. *(Beat)* I'm supposed to be worried about a prom dress or a calculus test. I'm not supposed to be worried about getting chemicals pumped into my body... and...and losing my hair.

Emily: And that's why you cut it all off?

Samantha: No, duh, Sherlock.

Emily: *(Pause)* When will you know the results for sure?

Samantha: I don't know. The doctor said he would call Mom.

(Silence. Then EMILY begins to laugh.)

Samantha: What?

(EMILY keeps laughing.)

Samantha: No, seriously, what?

(EMILY is laughing and SAMANTHA starts laughing at EMILY laughing.)

Emily: I was... I was just thinking about that time I fell off of my bike that one summer.

Samantha: When you broke your arm?

Emily: Yeah. Remember? We went to the ER. I was eight, so you had to be six. And you sat stock still in that chair in the waiting room with Dad, while Mom and I went back and had my arm put in a cast.

Samantha: I don't really remember that.

Emily: Oh, I do. I was walking back out, and you saw my bright purple cast. *(Beat)* And then you turned to Dad and yelled "You mean they didn't cut it off?"

Samantha: Yeah! I remember now. Dad and I were in the waiting room, and he said they were going to cut your arm off. *(Laughs)* I believed him.

Emily: You were so mad, because you didn't get a cast, too.

Samantha: Well, you only got purple, because you knew it was my favorite color.

Emily: Nu-uh.

Samantha: That's totally why you did it! Don't even try to deny it.

Emily: Well, that's like all the times when you would order my favorite things at restaurants, because you knew I wouldn't order the same thing.

Samantha: You could have had them, too.

Emily: I can't order the same thing as someone else at the table. That's stupid.

Samantha: The only reason I ordered the same as you... is because I wanted to be just like you.

Emily: Really?

Samantha: Yeah. All my friends at school thought you were the coolest person ever... with your camouflage backpack and your sneakers that would light up.

Emily: Man, kid stuff is the best.

Samantha: That's why I wanted to be in ballet.

DeMayo's—The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando—aired this episode.

(‘The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando’ has now taken on a much more cynical, almost sarcastic tone. Also, the audience should notice how ‘repetitive’ the script is. Many of the lines are from the earlier episode. It is as if Ann and Armando are on auto-pilot.)

Ann: Hola, friends! My name is Ann. It's short for *Annoying*.

Armando: You're telling me! Good morning, amigos! My name is Armando. It's short for—

Ann: Who cares. Kids, do you want to go on an adventure with us? *(Unenthusiastically)* Great.

Armando: You know the routine. Leave a note for your parents.

Ann: Just write, "Tired of this routine. Outta here. See ya!"

Armando: What? You don't know how to spell 'routine'?

Ann: Neither do we. Just scribble, "Later!" and let's go to Lima, Peru. Everyone ready?

Armando: Then let's start snapping! *(They snap their fingers three times)*

Ann: *(Even more unenthusiastically)* Look. We're in Lima, Peru. Look at all the poor people.

Armando: They are poor, because they don't have any money.

Ann: Money is important. You always need to have money, because you may want to buy something in Lima, Peru—like a souvenir.

Armando: Or illegal drugs. Oh, wait. Drugs are only illegal in America. Well, in most states they are. *(A little more enthusiastically now)* Those politicians just won't change the laws.

Ann: What we need—are people who are willing to grow up and become politicians.

Armando: Do you know what politicians are?

Ann: They are people like mayors, and governors—

Armando: And congressmen—

Ann: And congress *women*! And senators—

Armando: And señoritas!

Ann: And the president!

Armando: When you grow up, run for office, and then win your campaign by a landslide—you can change the laws! Or you can make a scandalous video of yourself and save it on your cell phone and become famous!

Ann: Until then—good luck with making any *real* money. What? You don't have any money?

Armando: Then you will have to *steal* some money from someone.

Ann: Look around. Do you see anyone that may have some money?

Armando: Look for a person who can't run faster than you.

Ann: Do you see anyone like that?

Armando: Hey, Ann, what about that old woman walking on crutches?

Ann: Armando, do you mean that old woman—the one who is carrying a big green bag with the ‘dollar sign’ on front?

Armando: She has just come from the bank. She withdrew her entire life savings, because her husband is dying.

Ann: He needs to have a heart transplant. *(Making up gestures for each and every one of the following words)* My heart—goes out—to you.

Armando: Quick! Run up to her and take her crutches away! Then grab the bag with the big ‘dollar sign’ on front! To her money isn’t as important as her dying husband, so she won’t care! Just tell her you are “borrowing” her money. That makes it totally legal.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: And we’ll stop the footage there. *(Beat)* In an earlier segment, you met Diane—who went through the savage and probably incredibly painful murder of her sweet little girl. Now, try to imagine Diane’s *horror*—when that *same* children’s show—*The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*—convinced her husband, Hank—to go on a *crime* spree of—*Oedipal*—proportions. *(Beat)* And it may take a while before that reference to—*Oedipus Rex* will—*sink in*—and you’ll realize how much underlying humor is revealed beneath the hard-hitting journalism—that exposes the very—blackheads—that plague our awesome country—America. *(Beat)* We spoke with Hank earlier today. *(Footage of Hank’s pre-recorded interview begins playing)*

Hank: It was them kids—that give me the idea.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: Ann and Armando?

Hank: Yep, them’s the ones. Here they was—talking about ‘borrowing’ from some old lady—walking around on *crutches*—carrying a big, old bag of *money*.

Mike ‘The Milker’ Monahan: While information such as that—might *entice* anyone suffering from financial *distress*—to *commit* such a crime—I’m having difficulty understanding why a grown man—a *grown man*—would think it was okay to “borrow” money from an old crippled woman without her consent, not to mention why you were watching a children’s television program in the *first* place. *(Beat)* Be honest. *(Beat)* Your daughter, Jessica, is *dead and rotting*. *(Beat)* The show is for *children*—you know, little *kids*. The show is not targeted toward grown-up supposedly mature men!

Hank: *(Looking at Mike suspiciously)* Listen, I’m not what you’d call—an *edumacated* individual—which is *WHY*—I was watching *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*. Hey, you’re never too old to learn! So I don’t *quite*—know what you’re *talking about*, but we don’t have a lot of *crippled* people around these parts. But I did hear—about a *blind people* convention coming to town at the end of the month. There ain’t no way they could have any money to “borrow” since those blind people can’t

catches a glimpse of her reflection in the mirror. SAMANTHA stops for a minute, touches her hair, and beings to cry.

Samantha: *(Crying):* Oh my word! What have I done?

Emily: I tried to tell you.

Samantha: My hair!

Emily: I know. *(Beat)* Trust me. I *know*.

Samantha: *(Sobbing):* Emily...

Emily: It will grow back. It’ll take some time, but eventually it will grow back.

Samantha: Emily...

Emily: And next time, you should consult me before doing anything drastic like this.

Samantha: *(Shouting):* Emily!

Emily: What?

Samantha: I have to tell you something.

Emily: Okay.

Samantha: Em... I’m sick.

Emily: Sick?

Samantha: I’m... I’m really sick.

Emily: Samantha, what’s going on?

Samantha: I went to the doctor this morning with Mom, because I’m so... tired. I’m tired all the time. The doctor did some blood work, and he...

Emily: Sammie, what are you saying?

Samantha: I think I’m really sick.

Emily: Sick how?

Samantha: I don’t know. He doesn’t have the full results back yet. He looked worried though. He and Mom talked in the hallway. Then she came back into the examining room, and she was flashing one of those super-fake smiles, you know?

Emily: Yeah... *(Beat)* I hate those.

Samantha: I think... I think I might be really sick.

Emily: Like...

Samantha: Like cancer sick.

Emily: *(Long pause)* When will you find out for sure?

Samantha: I don’t know. I didn’t hear what he said to me. I mean, the doctor was speaking directly to me, but I couldn’t hear him. My ears were filling up with blood or noise or grief or...*or something*, because I just walked out without saying anything. *(Beat)* Finally, I just got in the car and drove.

Emily: And you left *Mom* there?

Samantha: No, nimrod, I drove her back to work. I’m not that selfish.

Emily: Okay. I was just checking. It could have happened.

Samantha: Em...

Emily: I’m sorry. What do you want me to do?

Samantha: I don’t know. *(Beat)* I mean, I have absolutely no idea.

Emily: I don’t know what to say right now.

Samantha: No, he won't.

Emily: He might.

Samantha: You're overreacting.

Emily: Samantha, your hair!

Samantha: I know. I was there, when they cut it off.

Emily: As your older sister, I refuse to let you do this to yourself.

Samantha: Emily, it's already done. It's not something you can change.

Emily: Why? *(Beat)* Why would you do this?

Samantha: It's not YOUR hair. Okay? *(Beat)* Besides, it went to a worthy cause. *(Beat)* I donated my hair to that national organization—*Locks of Love*.

Emily: Isn't that where they take someone's hair and turn it into wigs for kids without hair?

Samantha: Yeah. The wigs are all made out of human hair that's been donated from all over the country. They give the wigs to young girls who can't grow their own anymore.

Emily: Sammie...that's super sweet and all, but... I can't fathom *why* you would *do* this. And in the winter?

Samantha: Yeah, it was kinda cold. It's refreshing! *(Beat)* Besides, I can wear a hat.

Emily: Yeah, that definitely solves the problem.

Samantha: I thought you would like it.

Emily: Well... I think it was kind of reckless. You look like a boy.

Samantha: I do not. A lot of women have short hair.

Emily: Short, yes...but balding?

Samantha: Okay, NOW you're overreacting.

Emily: You shouldn't have done it. You didn't even talk to me about it. What is Mom going to say?

Samantha: Well, hopefully, she'll be more supportive than you are.

Emily: I'm sorry, but I can't support bad decisions.

Samantha: Great. Thank you, almighty older sister. You have shown me the error of my ways. I will return to the hairdressers and demand they reattach the hair to my scalp, because, you know, *that's* possible.

Emily: I'm sorry, Sam, but this is so unlike you!

Samantha: That was the point! I just wanted to do something, you know, out there. *(Beat)* It's better than a tattoo, right?

Emily: You have to have graduation photos taken at some point. This is how people from high school are going to remember you.

Samantha: I hope people remember more than my short hair. If they only remember me for my hair, then I really don't want to come back for any reunions. Right?

Emily: Okay. Yeah. I can't... Okay. Do you like it?

Samantha: *(Beat)* I do. I like it.

Emily: Fine. Then... I like it, too.

Samantha: Thank you.

SAMANTHA goes and hangs up her coat. EMILY watches her as she

make no money, at least I don't SEE how the could.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: And how did you find out about this—*convention* for the blind?

Hank: I *saw* it—in the *paper*. *(Beat)* Which is why I was *surprised*—at how many people were in attendance! *(Beat)* I mean—*think* about it. *(Long pause)* How did they *know*? *(Beat)* Did they *read* about in the *paper*? *(Beat)* I don't *think* so. *(Beat)* Anyhow, I thought to myself, I thought, “Hmmm. Blind people, huh? Bet they would be *hard pressed* to chase after me once I stole, I mean, ‘borrowed’ their purses and billfolds!” *(Laughs at the thought of it, and then he immediately stops laughing)* I didn't think about their seeing *eye* dogs! *(Beat)* Those suckers can run like—*lightning*! *(Beat)* They caught me before I even had a chance to hide in the bushes and count my *loot*!

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Hank, how long is your prison sentence—the one you're now serving?

Hank: I'll be out in twenty years—if—I can keep up the good behavior.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: Before we leave you—Hank, what words of *advice* would you give—to the *other* grown men out there in our viewing audience—who might be as attracted to watching a Kiddie Show like *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*?

Hank: *(Big pause for dramatic effect)* I'd look them straight in the eye and say—crime doesn't pay. Well, stealing, I mean, ‘borrowing’ *does* pay, but you just can't get caught. *(Beat)* And Ann and Armando are PUNKS, because they never had no shows about that! I guess the bottom line is you can't learn all you need to know from a kiddie show.

Mike 'The Milker' Monahan: And there you have it, America. An EX-POSED giant, white, oozing zit on the face of America—*POPPED*—for *all* to see. *(Beat)* *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* may have just signed on for a third season—but hopefully—with viewers like *you*—you'll help put an end to this cleverly disguised and packaged ‘hidden agenda’ charade. *(Beat)* Sign a *petition*. Call your local *cable* provider. *(Beat)* Take an electrician's course at your local *junior college*—and learn how to rewire our next election's electronic *voting* booths—because *sleazy—slimy—over-indulgent—trashy* TV shows—have *no place*—on the small screen.

Feeling Like Cinderella

By Kendra Sparks

NOTES

Perhaps no fairy tale has touched more young hearts than *Cinderella*. Taking a modern spin on the tale of rags to riches, Kendra Sparks gives us a unique perspective for the contemporary performer. This humorous, yet at times, heartwarming selection should be performed by a female and may be entered in Poetry Interpretation. This is not the typical retelling of the story you grew up with, so show the sass, spirit and, at times, slightly sarcastic nature of the narrator, as she traverses through her own fairy tale. If desired, the first stanza may be used as a teaser before the introduction. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages in her manuscript.

My life is certainly not a fairy tale,
But lately, I've been feeling like—Cinderella.
Our lives are totally different,
But lately, I can't help it.
I feel like a Disney Princess.



Okay, so we're totally different.
Cinderella's mother died.
My mom's *alive*, but I *cried*
When she told us she wanted to try an alternative *lifestyle*.
Mom stayed with Dad and me for a *while*,
But then she left us to go live with Lisa,
A Zen-like lady, who works at her own flower shop.
Since then, it's just been Dad and me.



Cinderella's dad *remarried*.
My dad—joined *match.com*.
Mom just *laughed*,
But lately, Dad acts like he's been abducted
By some intergalactic *space* craft.
On his profile page,
Dad posted his college yearbook picture—*twice*!
All of which was totally against that my *advice*!
I get it. He wants to look *younger*.
Still, when I'm *hungry*, I don't eat fake *food*!

NOTES

It has often been said, “A woman’s hair is her crowning glory.” In her latest, heartfelt one-act play, *It's Not About the Hair*, Bridget Grace Sheaff introduces us to Samantha and Emily, two sisters, who, together, prove that there is little that can stand between the bonds of sisterhood. This play deals with the very real and legitimate problem that plagues many women today—the loss of their hair; however, this play does have its lighter moments. Play the humor; after all, have you ever seen two sisters sharing inside jokes and laughing until their sides hurt? Trust me, those are the moments where audiences open up their hearts and feel comfortable enough to laugh right along with the characters onstage. This is a realistic drama with humor, but please do not alter your appearance to add realism to the performance of this selection. The audience will always use its collective imagination and, through realistic portrayals by the actresses, believe there is a loss of hair. This play should be performed by two females and be entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting.

Characters:

Samantha, 17-years-old

Emily, 19-years-old

The following scene takes place in the family living room. No one is on stage. SAMANTHA comes in from the street. She has cropped hair, more specifically a pixie cut, and she wears a winter coat.

Samantha: Hello? Anyone home? Emily?

EMILY enters as SAMANTHA is taking off her coat.

Emily: What? (*She sees Sam's hair*) Oh... What...the heck?

Samantha: Hey, what's up?

Emily: What have you done?

Samantha: What? (*Referring to her hair*) Oh, this? Yeah, I figured... you know, why not?

Emily: Why not?

Samantha: Yeah.

Emily: Because you look ridiculous, that's 'why not.'

Samantha: Oh, come on. It doesn't look that bad.

Emily: You look like Peter Pan. (*Or replace with equivalent name of someone with ultra-short hair*)

Samantha: I take that as a very high compliment. Maybe it means, “I'll never grow up!” So thank you.

Emily: Dad is going to kill you.

It's Not About the Hair

By Bridget Grace Sheaff

Another Teenage Cliché

By Gregory T. Burns

a girl on his computer, because I thought he was gay. I mean, all of the signs were there. Joe was handsome, clean cut, and he never had a girl-friend or dated anyone. He dressed nice, too, but he wasn't into all of the name brands. And he was polite. It was more than obvious to me. I think Joe is just another example of a confused young man.

But perhaps no one is more shocked than Joe's parents. His mom and dad hold pictures of Joe in their laps, as a national magazine photographer snaps *their* picture, which will appear on its tabloid cover early next week. Joe's story is making national news and soon will be plastered for all to see at check-out lines in grocery stores from coast to coast.



This story doesn't have a happy ending, and no one lives happily ever after. Joe spent his whole young life looking at others and attaching labels to them. He grouped cliques together and looked down upon them as stereotypes. When you think about it, it's ironic. Joe, who had such an aversion to society's stereotypes, today, sadly, has ended up being—just another teenage cliché.

Trust me. Fake is *fake*!
And it doesn't take an Einstein to *understand*
A person *can't* find a soul mate, when—while *on* the date—
The other person will clearly *see* the huge *age* discrepancy!

Regardless, it is *through* this social equivalent of a modern-day *Cupid*
That Dad met a dietician named Katy.
It's *stupid*. All she talks about are carbs and *calories*.
But lately, while chomping on a raw stalk of *celery*,
I notice Katy's been trying to find out about Dad's *salary*.
She has two teenage daughters, Mary Kate and Ashley.
As though setting a trap for a curious *mouse*,
Katy has her sights on her *own* 'Full House.'

Clearly, Cinderella and I *both* have *father* issues.
Is it any wonder I feel a certain *bond*
With this *blonde* fairy tale *princess*?



Okay, Cinderella attended a ball.
I went to a *rave*.
Okay, so I *gave* into my curiosity.
What can I say? Mosh pits are *fun*!

Another reason we're so totally *opposite*.
Cinderella got to *sit* in the back a pumpkin-turned-*coach*—
Wearing a beautiful gown and a pair of glass slippers—
Given to her by a Fairy Godmother, a few mice
And half a dozen singing *birds*.

In case you haven't heard,
All *I* had to work with—was a dull pair of scissors—
Which I used to cut *holes* into a thrift store t-shirt and *jeans*.

It didn't amount to a hill of *beans*,
Because *knowing* I was going to the *rave*
Made me *feel*—like Cinderella.



If you'll recall, at the *Ball*—
Once the clock struck twelve—
Cinderella *left* the dance, and in the process—

Feeling Like Cinderella

By Kendra Sparks

Feeling Like Cinderella

By Kendra Sparks

Lost a glass slipper on the steps of the palace.
Alas, the Prince, knowing he had found his one true love,
Went *way* above the call of duty
To search the kingdom for the girl whose *heart* had won *his*.
Gee *whiz*, if it worked in a fairy tale, then maybe...



The rave didn't have a prince,
And since 'The Artist Formerly Known *As...*' wasn't there,
I dared to find my own unique version.
Okay, there are those who have an *aversion* to punk rock music,
But the lead guitarist of the Pig-Butt Skiers was hot—
Not that he was looking for *love*, but he found it anyway.
What can I say? Our eyes locked,
And he accidentally *knocked over* his microphone stand.
It was as if the whole thing was *planned*!

As the lead guitarist *rocked* out on stage,
It was like a *page* out of a steamy teenage novel.
His long golden locks flew through the air
Like the propellers on a plane.
His hair slung *rain* down onto the crowd,
And the music was so *loud* I couldn't hear myself think.
His icy-blue eyes were so piercing—
The iceberg hit by the *Titanic* would have melted.



As the lead singer *belted* out the last song,
I thought long and hard.
I did my best to channel Cinderella.
What *reason* could I give this master of decimal *deliciousness*
To search the city looking for *me*?
There was no way I was going to give up one of my *sneakers*!
Jeepers *Creepers*, shoes aren't *free*!
Besides, the whole 'glass *slipper*' thing was an *accident*,
But do I dare? Shall I *chance* it?

As the last notes were played,
I *stayed* until the last spotlight dimmed.
I *skimmed* my fingers into my back pocket
And took out my mysterious souvenir.
As the band took their bows,

Trish's family will be gone for the weekend. Trish's grandfather is a resident at the nursing home where Joe works, and last week, Joe overheard Trish's mother telling her father-in-law that they would be driving down to the coast for three days. So Joe creates a plan. He'll install the spy cams in Trish's bedroom on the second night of her family getaway. Joe even sets up surveillance on Trish's house the first night of their family vacation, so that he can be sure they're really gone. What Joe doesn't know—is that Trish spent the night at a friend's house the night before. When she finds Joe, not only in her house, but in her bedroom, Trish freaks out. She starts throwing things at Joe, and she threatens to call the police. The rest, as they say, is a teenage tragedy.



The headlines in the next day's paper describe it all: *Teenage Stalker Claims to Have Loved Victim*. Of course, the media jumps all over the story. After all, this story has everything: A handsome loner, an unrequited love story and the all-too-familiar tragic ending. The media, willing to talk to anyone who knows Joe, scours the city looking for sound bites, and the interviews that make the cut, like all stories that make headlines, are a mixture of pin-pointed accuracy and complete fabrication and speculation—all from people searching for their fifteen minutes of fame.



This from an interview with Donald Brown, a resident at the nursing home, where Joe was a part-time employee: *I'm shocked. I thought Joe was a real fine fellow. You hear so many bad things about teenagers today, but I always liked Joe. He was a real good kid. I was always teasing him about how many girls must be chasing him at school, and he would always say, "No, Mr. Brown. I've got a steady girlfriend." And then I'd wink at him and thought how much he reminded me of how I was at his age. It's funny. Joe always liked hanging out in my room when he finished his rounds here at the home. He liked to ask me about my days in the war. He was a smart boy. A week ago, he asked me about how, during the war, soldiers broke into locked up buildings and such. Like I said, I'm shocked about the whole thing.*

And this from a televised interview with Sharon Holden, a third-year teacher from Joe's high school: *I'm the teacher who identifies with all of the kids, so they're always telling me things. The students will confide in me and ask me for advice, because, you know, the kids trust me. I'm extremely intuitive, because I get them. I get these kids. I can relate to these kids. And, honestly, I'm surprised to learn that Joe even had pictures of*

Another Teenage Cliché

By Gregory T. Burns

Another Teenage Cliché

By Gregory T. Burns

please welcome Trish, a transfer student from out-of-state, who had just moved to their city the day before. Joe had never known about the term *love-at-first-sight* before that day, but that's what he experienced. That's exactly what he had experienced that second day of seventh-grade.



Most people don't have a clue that Joe is a self-proclaimed amateur photographer. He started taking pictures when his parents bought him a camera for Christmas when he was fourteen. Joe loves taking pictures. It's his passion. As a photographer, Joe can be an observer. He can capture moments—moments he wants to treasure forever. He takes countless photos, because these are the images that represent his youth. They're the mementos he will cherish in his old age someday. He keeps his photos in secret files, which he saves on his computer at home, the one his parents got him for his birthday three years ago. The files would be easy to find, if anyone were to ever look, because they're all just a slight variation on the same file name. Each file contains hundreds of photos and every single file begins with her name, *Trish*, followed by a number—all 3,732 of them.



Clearly, Joe's obsession with Trish started on the second day of seventh-grade. Since then, his room has been turned into a secret shrine for his unrequited love. Joe has pictures of Trish, and he has videos of Trish; Joe has even created an entire web site dedicated to Trish. Of course, he never intends to launch this web site on the Internet. No, the web site is solely for him. It's his tribute to his one-and-only love, his reason for living. Don't you see? This—*this* is a way for Joe to be with Trish at any time. And he does spend time with her. When Joe isn't working down at the retirement home, he studies. He's quite academic, much more-so than most would suspect, but remember, Joe isn't one to draw attention to himself. He rarely, if ever, raises his hand in class. Joe's teachers, who, through classroom assignments and standardized tests, know of his intelligence *and* of his aversion to attention, so they choose to take the easy way out and leave Joe alone during class discussions.



For an early graduation present, Joe's parents give him one of those credit cards that work just like a real credit card, but are given in the form of a gift card. Joe's parents are generous, so much so that Joe goes down to the local spy shop and buys two top-of-the-line spy cams. Now, Joe just needs an open window of opportunity to install them. He learns that

I stormed toward the front rows
And tossed my modern-day glass slipper to the man
Whose *hand* reached out and caught my gift.
I shifted my eyes, and to my *surprise*—
Found the clock on the Arbitron read one.
Oh, no! My curfew!



Whew! Luckily Dad was out with Katy.
I was in bed before he got home.
As I drifted off to sleep, sweet sounds filled my ears.
It was just as I feared.
My ears were still *ringing* from the rave.

For the first time in my young life,
I was *singing* in my dreams.

It seems I may have found my Prince Charming.
The question is: Will he find *me*?



He called me at three the next afternoon!
And as soon as he called, I started to worry.
I needed my mysterious souvenir back by Monday morning.
His name is Blake, and he's coming by later
To give me *back* my pseudo glass slipper.

If that's not enough to give me a *heart* attack,
Dad told me Katy's bringing the twins by tonight.
I might as well laugh!
It's just so—Cinderella. You know?

Go with the flow, I always say.
Besides, even if the twins find Blake to be cute,
The Cinderella theory is moot.
There won't be any glass slippers here.
Feeling like Cinderella is all fine and good,
But what I left at the rave isn't made of *glass*.
No. Blake will *definitely* know me.

What did I throw onto the stage last night, you ask?
My phone number—*taped*—to my student I.D.

Feeling Like Cinderella

By Kendra Sparks

NOTES

Michael Jackson is unquestionably the King of Pop. In his heartwarming first-person confessional, author Leo Cannon introduces us to two siblings, who share countless hours together listening to Michael Jackson's greatest hits and trying to emulate his world-renowned dance moves. This selection may be performed by either a male or female and may be entered in either Prose Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. Obviously, the subject matter alone builds an instant rapport with the audience, so don't cheat them by rushing the lines. Also, don't make the mistake of playing the overall dramatic tone at the beginning of the selection. As a performer, you never want to give away the ending too soon. If the performer is willing and/or is able to recreate any of Jackson's famous moves, it can only add to the overall nostalgia of the story. This is the story about the King of Pop, the secret bond between two siblings, and learning to deal with the loss of a loved one. If performed in Prose Interpretation, the drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages of the manuscript.

I was ten years old the day my mother left my father. My little brother, Michael, and I were watching a marathon of Michael Jackson videos in our bedroom. We were trying to tune out the crying, screaming and cursing coming from the kitchen. Michael and I were scared, but overall, it was just a normal night for us. We were used to our parents' bickering. As the older brother, I always tried to distract Michael from our parents' fighting. I didn't want him to be scared.



We were practicing our Michael Jackson moves. You know, my brother was only six at the time, but he could do the moon-walk as good as The King of Pop himself—Michael Jackson. My little brother would always claim that he's going to be a big star like Michael Jackson one day. After all, they shared the same first name. It was only a matter of time. I didn't doubt it. My brother was that good. I sat on the bed, while my brother was showing off his moon-walking skills. He would glide across the hard wood floors like he was floating on air. Then we would switch places, and I would practice my spin and pelvis thrust.



When Mom walked into our room that night, we both froze like we were caught doing something illegal. Then I noticed that our mom's face

at one point during the party, she got a little tipsy and sort-of-lost count. Then, who can forget Tyler, the guy who has made fun of Joe ever since they were in fourth grade together, when during the celebrated *Field Day* that year, Tyler tripped Joe during the tire-roll race. Tyler then told everyone watching that poor Joe lost the race because he was 'tired.' Everyone laughed. As stupid as that joke was—every single one of them laughed. Joe remembers that. Joe remembers that day like it happened yesterday. Tyler still makes fun of Joe from time-to-time, but Joe has learned to tune him out. Besides, not everyone considers Tyler to be the up-and-coming *Will Ferrell* anymore. And saving the best for last, Jules, the girl who shares four classes a day with Joe, tells anyone who will listen what an individual she is, even though she's never, and I mean *never* been seen on or *off* campus without at least three other wannabes by her side at all times. She hates her parents and proclaims to be a poet, because she's just learned guitar and writes her own songs.



Looks and appearance are important at Joe's school; after all, looks and appearance are important at all schools. That's probably Joe's saving grace from being labeled a freak. Joe is nice looking, handsome, most would say. In fact, one time, a man from a New York modeling agency handed Joe's parents a business card. He asked if Joe had ever done any professional modeling, or acting—or if he sang. All of Joe's responses were in the negative, of course, but his parents kept ribbing him, like Joe was some sort of celebrity. That embarrassed Joe. After all, he's never liked attention. Joe's parents told him how proud they would be, if they could see his picture in a magazine—or him starring in one of his mom's favorite soap operas. Joe loves his parents, and he would like to make their wishes come true, but he's far too reserved to be a model or an actor or, heaven forbid, a singer. No. Joe is a loner. Everyone accepts that. Even Joe's parents know that. As far as Joe's classmates are concerned, if Joe wants to hang out by himself, so be it. After all, what high school doesn't have a loner or two, right?



Now, all teenagers have secrets. Joe is no exception. But while all of his peers are pairing off and going steady, or going out on group dates, or holding hands between classes and sneaking kisses behind opened locker doors, Joe remains single. To everyone's knowledge, Joe has never had a girlfriend; however, there is one girl who interests him. She's interested Joe ever since the second day of seventh-grade, when she walked into his English class. The teacher introduced her to everyone and told the class to

NOTES

Teenagers, at times, are walking billboards for stereotypes. In his chilling short story, Gregory T. Burns introduces us to a high school senior, Joe, who tries to avoid the labels often associated with his peers. This selection may be performed by a male or female and may be entered in Prose Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. It is critical for the performer to not give away the ending at the beginning of this selection. The audience should get a sense that Joe is an atypical teenager, someone who marches to his own drum; therefore, one of the first tasks for the performer will be to determine the identity of the narrator. Is the narrator someone who knew Joe? Is the narrator a fellow classmate? Is the narrator a secret admirer? Perhaps the narrator is one of Joe's teachers or his counselor. Make a strong choice, because the narrator's relationship with Joe will affect the believability of the story being told. If used in Prose Interpretation, the drama mask icons simply suggest where to turn the pages of the manuscript.

This is the story about a teenager named Joe. While other teenagers hang out at the mall, go to the movies, and retake driving tests, Joe works part-time at a local nursing home. Joe doesn't seem to fit in with any of the other teenagers his age. No, Joe is a *loner*, which is fine with him, because it gives him time to think about things, *important* things—things that really matter in life—*real* life. So while his classmates are dating and worrying about how many designer labels they own; while they gossip about who is dating whom, and who is trying out for the fall musical; while other teenagers go to parties and participate in extra-curricular activities after school, Joe more-or-less keeps to himself.



Every day in school, Joe tries to be as inconspicuous as possible; and while he isn't one to crave attention, Joe is *very* aware of those around him. He knows them. He knows them all, and in a way, Joe feels like he knows his classmates better than they know themselves. Take his life skills class, for example. This one girl, Karen, who sits in front of him, is pregnant. She's not sure who the father is, *but* he's definitely a member of the varsity soccer team, because according to her best friend and confidant, a girl everyone calls *Twilight*, Karen has never had an intimate relationship with a boy before or *since* that impromptu keg party, where she thinks she hooked up with three boys, but it might have been four, because

looked like it was really sunburned. Still frozen in our awkward poses, Michael asked her what happened. Mom muttered something about Dad not liking the beans she made, and then she told us to go get in the car. Without questioning her, we followed Mom out of our bedroom, as ironically, the underscore of Michael Jackson's "Beat It" was blaring from the television. As we walked through the kitchen on our way to the garage, a pot of steaming hot beans decorated the floor. All too soon, it became perfectly clear what was happening. We were leaving—and most likely, we were never coming back. Across the room, Dad was sitting quietly on the couch. He looked at Michael and me with glassy eyes and said softly, "I'm sorry." That was the last time we ever saw or heard from our father again. After that night, whenever anyone asked Michael why we didn't have a dad, he'd always say it was because my mom didn't know how to cook beans.



Mom, without any college credits or previous work experience, somehow managed to land two jobs, and we moved into a tiny, one-bedroom rental house in the slums. The house was so old that I really believed it was built before Jesus was born. Mom gave us the bedroom, and she slept on the couch. This worked out great, since she was always at work most of the time anyway. While Mom was at work, I was in charge of babysitting Michael. I thought this was a huge compliment. It meant Mom trusted me to be the man, and I did my best not to disappoint her. At ten-years-old, it never occurred to me that I was babysitting simply because we couldn't afford a real babysitter.



One day at lunch, while we were eating my culinary specialty of slightly burned popcorn and a bowl of cream of mushroom soup, Michael and I were brain-storming. We were trying to figure out our next great business venture. We were always trying to think of ways to make money to help Mom out. We tried selling punch in front of our house, but it was so hot that we drank it all ourselves. One time, we picked flowers out of other people's flower beds, and then we went door-to-door selling them. When one of our customers realized we were selling her flowers out of her *own* yard, we had to shut the operation down. This day, however, we were eating and listening to the radio, and a Michael Jackson song came on. My brother immediately jumped up from the table and started dancing around, and I had a genius idea. We could put on our own dance show on our front porch and charge admission.



Michael was totally onboard, and immediately we went door-to-door invit-

Missing Michael

By Leo Cannon

ing all of the neighborhood kids to our show. Admission was only twenty-five cents, so we knew the kids would come. After canvassing the neighborhood, we went home and got into our costumes, which included trash bags we tied up to look like parachute pants. That afternoon, right on time, we came out of the house to collect the admission fees, and just as expected, all of the neighborhood kids were there. That's right. All five of them showed up, including Eddie, a 16-year-old boy with Cerebral Palsy. Even though he was older, everyone treated Eddie like he was our age. Also, Eddie was really big. He was the only one who couldn't afford the quarter admission, so we made him earn his keep by being our security guard.



Finally, it was show time! The stage was set. We gave all of our guests a Dixie cup of warm orange punch, set the CD player on the porch, took our places and pressed play. "Smooth Criminal" started to pound out of the tiny speakers. One of the neighbors was mowing his lawn, so it was a little hard to hear. I started our show with my almost-famous spin and thrust, while Michael moon-walked back and forth across our six-foot porch. The crowd was clapping and laughing. Suddenly, Michael did a giant leap and jump, which I had never seen him do before. The crowd went wild! Eddie started telling the fans to step back! Then Michael just stopped dancing altogether, and he started holding the back of his neck. Everybody went silent. Something was wrong. That's when everyone noticed the wasps taking flight into the air. I looked up and saw a wasp nest hanging inside the porch light above us. Suddenly, it was mayhem. All of the kids started screaming and ran off in different directions—everyone that is except Eddie, who simply yelled, "Security!" and stormed onto the porch. He picked Michael up in his arms and rushed him into the house.



Inside, Eddie quickly evaluated us. The wasps didn't sting me, but Michael got stung behind his left ear. Eddie also got stung several times, but he didn't even act like it hurt. Michael started saying that he was feeling weird. It seemed like only seconds had passed, and Michael's entire body was blowing up like a balloon. Eddie and I could actually see his skin moving. It looked like Michael had stuff swirling under his skin. His skin looked like it was made of shiny wax.



I ran to the phone to call mom. Mom's boss told me that she couldn't come to the phone. I told her it was a big emergency. I was trying to make her understand that Michael got stung, and something was wrong! Finally, the lady told me that she would have Mom call me back. I angrily slammed the phone down. While I was waiting for Mom to call me back,

Michael's skin was getting warmer to the touch. I told Eddie to carry Michael into the bathroom and put him under a cold shower. Eddie started crying and rubbing Michael's skin. Michael's face had swollen so much that it looked like he didn't even have eyes anymore. Instead, there were just these two red slits where his eyes used to be. Under the running water, Michael was trying to talk, but his face was too swollen. Instead of ineligible words, Eddie and I just heard this horrible wheezy noise coming from Michael's mouth. Eddie started screaming and hitting himself on his head yelling, "I'm security! I'm security! It's my fault!" I told Eddie that it was nobody's fault.



After Michael died, Mom couldn't get in touch with Dad. Nobody could get in touch with him. It was like he just vanished. To this day, I'm not even sure if dad knows that one of his sons is dead. Mom was so torn apart after Michael's death that we moved and went to live with Grandma.



The day the world found out that Michael Jackson, The King of Pop, had passed away, it was obviously a great shock for everyone. But it was especially tough for Mom and me. All of the pain of my brother's death just came rushing back for both of us; but at the same time, I couldn't stop thinking about all the fun times Michael and I had dancing and singing together. I also couldn't help but think about my dad. It was strange to think that somewhere out there, Dad was watching the news about Michael Jackson's death, and he didn't even know that his own son, Michael, was gone. While the whole world was missing Michael Jackson, Mom and I were missing Michael, too. Only we were missing the Michael that never had a chance to be a star.

By Leo Cannon

Missing Michael