

NOBODY'S LISTENING

by e. shockley

www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com

Commissioned by the Children's Theatre of Charlotte

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Nobody's Listening is a play within a play about a live television broadcast gone awry. It was inspired by an intensive series of interviews with Public Defenders, Educators, Juvenile Offenders, Crime Desk Journalists, Counselors, Politicians, Clergy and Parents. The fictional story draws upon the attitudes, issues and information supplied by these generous collaborators in an attempt to expose the conditioned response pattern that often ends in tragedy.

Verisimilitude is essential. It is important for the appearance of a real broadcast to exist as a possibility at least for the first few moments of the performance. This can be achieved by devoting meticulous attention to the construction of the cameras. This play was conceived by Scott Miller of Children's Theatre of Charlotte to incite discussion that is elaborated upon in post play classroom workshops.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MR.CARP, hard nosed Hollywood obsessed director who is constantly on his cell phone.

BERNIE, assistant director. Noted for his efficiency and professionalism.

HOPE, attractive, talented, young actress.

BOBBY CLOY/HOODY, young Sylvester Stallone clone. Chain smoker.

CELESTE/SNAKE, classically mis-educated young actress.

LOUIS/MECH BOY, urban middle school student

First performed at Children's Theatre of Charlotte. Directed by Scott Miller with the following cast:

MR. CARP

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

HOPE

CELESTE/SNAKE

BOBBY CLOY/HOODY

Kevin Campbell

Jeffrey Cousar

Marta King

Darlene Parker Black

Tim Grant

SCENE I

(The performance space is divided into three areas. Center-stage is the portable set of the television show, *The Adventures of Mech-Boy*. There are two remote controlled cameras directed at the cafeteria table that dominates this space. Stage right there is a director's chair. Stage left is a costume rack. BERNIE, the assistant director, straightens up the stage and does a light check while the audience is being seated. He then leaves until after the school business is completed. Enter Bernie wearing headset.)

BERNIE

Hallo? Hallo? Somebody get on the headset, please. Hallo? Wooh! Turn the volume down! Yeah, very funny but I don't want any horsing around out there. We're gonna have our hands full with these new fangled remote controlled cameras. And that's only the half of it. You ever work with Carp before? Well, take my word for it, you do not want to get on the wrong side of this fish.

(Enter Mr. Carp)

CARP

Cameras ready to roll?

BERNIE

Yes, Mr. Carp.

CARP

Good. Good. So, do these kids know what's going on?

BERNIE

I assumed that you'd want to be the one to instruct them.

CARP

(to Audience)

Okay...Listen up, people. We're here on location at... Where are we, Bernie?

(Bernie says the name of the school.)

CARP (cont'd)

Yeah. We're here to broadcast the pilot of a new TV series that focuses on youth violence called, "The Adventures of Mech-Boy." What better place to do a show on teen violence, right? You guys are my studio audience. We'll be sending a signal out live to a remote truck and going straight into about a quarter of a million homes so I need everybody to mind their p's and q's, especially when we're on the air. Bernie there will signal us into and out of segments so pay attention to him. It's a fun show, you're gonna have a good time, so go ahead and laugh but when Bernie does this...Bernie?

(Bernie signals.)

Then you've got to clam up quick cause we're riding a clock to get to each commercial break. Okay, that's about it...Let's do a light check.

BERNIE

It's already been done.

CARP

We get one shot at this and I don't plan to be working out of middle-school auditoriums for the rest of my career. So humor me, Bernie, and check everything, twice.

BERNIE

(into headset)

Sarah, standby light check. I know we did but we're going to check them again.

CARP

Where are my actors?

BERNIE

(into headset)

Give me first electric, please?

CARP

Why aren't the actors here?

BERNIE

(into headset)

Hold on, Sarah.

(to Carp)

I set up a place over there so they could relax and stay out of our way. Would you like for me to assemble the cast?

CARP

You finish my light check, I'll handle the divas.

BERNIE

(into headset)

Where were we, Sarah? Okay. Second electric.

CARP

(calling offstage)

Come on, Kiddies, it's showtime.

(Enter Bobby, Hope and Celeste)

CELESTE

Did my watch stop?

CARP

Move, people, move!

HOPE

(to fellow actors)

Don't you just hate it when he says that?

CARP

We're on the clock.

SNAKE

(to Hope)

What?

HOPE

"Move people, move." It makes me feel like a cow being herded to slaughter.

BERNIE

(into headset)

We might as well run the mike check again too. Mike one. Testing one, two, three...

BOBBY

(to actors)

I don't care what he calls me so long as he films my good side.

CARP

Mech-Boy? Mech-Boy?

HOPE

(to Bobby)

I hadn't noticed that you had a good side.

BERNIE

(into headset)

Mike two, testing one, two, three...

CARP

Has anybody seen my Mech-Boy?

CELESTE

He went back to his dressing-room.

CARP

Why would he go there when we're minutes away from airing?

CELESTE

He ate eleven of the breakfast cakes before he realized they were prune Danish.

BOBBY

Serves him right for taking all the good stuff off the snack table.

BERNIE

Mike three testing one, two...

CARP

Go get Mech-Boy.

BERNIE

We're right in the middle of...

CARP

I didn't ask what you were doing, Bernie; I asked you to go get Calvin's overlarge behind out on the set, please.

BERNIE

(into headphones)

Just do the best you can, Sarah. Duty calls.

(to cast)

Six minutes everybody.

(Exit Bernie)

BOBBY

(to Actors)

Do you think McDanish is going to make it?

CELESTE

I don't think. That's what he gets paid for.

CARP

Nobody go wandering off and getting lost on me, you hear?

HOPE

(to Bobby)

Would you mind not smoking?

BOBBY

It helps me relax.

HOPE

And it gives the rest of us lung cancer.

BOBBY

Hold your breath.

(Bernie enters. Hope quietly steals Bobby's lighter.)

BERNIE

We have a big problem.

CARP

There are no problems in live television, only situations to be resolved before the commercial break ends.

BERNIE

Well, the situation is that Mech-Boy tried to use the John in his trailer without first removing his costume.

CARP

And?

BOBBY

Has anybody seen my lighter?

BERNIE

He's stuck.

CARP

(to Actors)

Do a final check, people, make sure you're ready to go in...

BERNIE

Five minutes.

CARP
 We go in five minutes.
 (to Bernie)
 What'dya mean, he's stuck?
BERNIE
 Which word didn't you understand?
BOBBY
 It was right here a minute ago.
CELESTE
 Shhh!
CARP
 He can't be stuck!
BERNIE
 Tell him that.
BOBBY
 (to Celeste)
 You want me to be quiet then you find me a light for my cigarette.
CELESTE
 (to Carp)
 Calvin's stuck?
CARP
 Mind your business!
 (to Bernie)
 And you go get my Mech-Boy!
BOBBY
 Check if you see my lighter while you're back there.
BERNIE
 It's hopeless.
BOBBY
 Maybe I left it in the trailer.
CARP
 Will you go have your nicotine fit someplace else!

HOPE

(to Celeste)

What's going on?

CARP

(to Bernie)

It's never hopeless, only bleak.

CELESTE

Calvin's locked himself in the bathroom.

BERNIE

(to Carp)

Very bleak.

HOPE

(to Celeste)

Why?

BOBBY

Probably a contract thing. I wish I had thought of it.

CARP

Break the wall. Pry him out with a crowbar. I don't care what you do but get that fat fool on this set immediately!

BERNIE

The wall is solid steel. They've tried tying a rope around him, soaked him in Wesson Oil. He is not going to move.

HOPE

(to Carp)

What's up with Calvin?

CARP

You don't worry your pretty little head, Sweetie. Just get ready for the cafeteria scene. We air in...

BERNIE

Four minutes.

(Hope rejoins the others.)

CARP

Think! I'm going live in four minutes and I've got no Mech-Boy.

BERNIE

You also have no understudy since you opted to spend the money on that beautiful stretch limo parked outside.

CARP

There's a way out of this thing.

BERNIE

Is suicide and option?

CARP

Okay, okay! Do we still have a spare costume?

BERNIE

Yes.

CARP

Get it.

BERNIE

Why?

CARP

Because I'm the one who decides if you still have a job tomorrow.

(Bernie crosses to the clothes rack.)

BOBBY

I've waited years for a break like this and now the show's gonna get canceled because some greedy creep gets caught in the crapper.

(Carp climbs down into the audience.)

HOPE

How long till broadcast?

CELESTE

About three minutes.

BOBBY

What broadcast, ding-bat? We've got no Mech-Boy.

CARP

Is there an acting program at your school? Never mind, at this point who cares? You, stand up. Come on, time is money! Wrong type, sit down. You. Wait a minute, are you a girl? What are you wasting my time for, I'm looking for Mech-Boy!

(Bernie is standing directly behind Carp with the costume.)

CARP

What's taking that idiot so long with that...uh, thanks, Bernie.

HOPE

How long?

CARP

Buy a watch, doll; we're busy.

(Carp measures the suit against several students.)

CELESTE

I know he's not planning to put me on camera live with some untrained amateur.

CARP

(to Louis)

Can you read?

LOUIS

Of course I can read.

BOBBY

As long as I get a close-up for my monologue I don't care what he does.

CARP

Bernie, find the cue cards for the big speech from the last scene.

(Bernie leafs through the cue cards.)

Okay, Kid, here's the deal. I've got a live show about a robot boy and I've got no robot boy. If you can read the lines on the cue cards and not trip over your own feet then in twenty-seven minutes you'll be five hundred dollars richer.

LOUIS

Five hundred dollars?

CARP

You could go for that, couldn't you?

LOUIS

I could go for that.

CARP

Time, Bernie?

Sixty seconds.

BERNIE

(Carp takes the cue card from Bernie.)

Okay, Kid, save my bacon.

CARP

LOUIS

(Reading)

I wasn't born, I was built. I had to spend years on a laboratory bench because I had...

CARP

You're hired. Slap the suit on him.

(Bernie starts to help Louis with the pants.)

Forget the pants, just do the chest-piece and headgear.

(Louis tries to help with the costume.)

That's what he gets paid for. Eyes on me. Now, you're playing Mech-Boy. That's short for mechanical Boy. You're a teenage robot, respectful, nonviolent, smart. The perfect kid. This is the first episode. Scene one is in the cafeteria of a new school.

(Carp snaps his finger at Hope. She crosses to them.)

Stick close to this dame. She plays your best friend and she'll keep you in the right place.

HOPE

Good luck, kid.

LOUIS

Thanks.

CARP

(to Louis)

You could do worse. Bobby! Front and center.

(Bobby crosses to them.)

This lowlife plays the local thug. You and him get into a thing over a cafeteria chair but you come out on top because you've got smarts. Time?

BERNIE

Thirty seconds.

CARP

Get him ready...Huddle people...and find me an aspirin.

BOBBY

You just got to remember one thing, Kid.

LOUIS

What's that?

BOBBY

Don't ever stand on this side of me.

BERNIE

Get out of here, Bobby. Look, kid, I wish there was time to talk you through the whole show but there isn't so you just keep your eyes glued to these cards and read any lines that say, Mech-Boy. If you get stuck then remember you're the perfect kid and do something because we're broadcasting live. Places.

CARP

And despite everything, let's try to have some fun out there.

CELESTE

Fun? I'm a conservatory trained thespian and I am being asked to perform with an unschooled adolescent.

CARP

Move it, people, move it. You have my aspirin, Bernie?

BERNIE

Mech-Boy pilot live broadcast scene one...

CELESTE

Wait; I haven't prepared properly.

(Celeste assumes a yoga stance.)

BERNIE

...in six, five, four...

(Bernie continues the count with his fingers then signals, "Action." Celeste snaps into character as "Snake". Enter Mech-Boy and Hope.)

CELESTE/SNAKE

Woooooh! What's that?

HOPE

This is my science fair project.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Let me guess, a remote controlled vacuum cleaner.

HOPE

It's a prototype of NASA's Mobile Mechanical Being with Expanding Artificial Intelligence.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Come again?

HOPE

It's a robot that can learn.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Learn what?

HOPE

Anything we choose to teach it.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Can you teach it to say, "I'll be bok."

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

I'll be bok.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Cool.

HOPE

I petitioned NASA and they agreed to let us participate in a socialization experiment for the rest of the school year.

BOBBY/HOODY

(off camera)

And just what does that mean in country English?

CARP

(into headset)

Standby sinister music.

HOPE

Mech-Boy will be joining our school to learn how to act.

(Enter Bobby as Hoody)

CELESTE/SNAKE

There goes the neighborhood.

BOBBY/HOODY

I'm happy to see you too, Snake. Who's your friend?

HOPE

This is my science project. We're supposed to treat it the same as we would any other student.

BOBBY/HOODY

Give me your lunch money, Dork.

CELESTE/SNAKE

You're not funny.

BOBBY/HOODY

I can't say the same for you because I laugh every time I see your face.

CELESTE/SNAKE

With lines like that I bet you'll be on TV in no time; the six o'clock news doing like this.

(Celeste pulls her sweater up over her head like a suspect.)

BOBBY/HOODY

I'll be on there for beating down a little smart mouthed girl.

HOPE

You two are setting a really bad example for the robot.

BOBBY/HOODY

Ugly as he is he ought to be glad we let him in the lunchroom at all.

CELESTE/SNAKE

He dissed you, Iron Man, you gonna take that?

HOPE

Guys, now we don't want to teach him every bad habit we've learned over the years.

BOBBY/HOODY

Why not?

CELESTE/SNAKE

Because he might turn out like you and your mamma.

HOPE

Have a seat, Mech-Boy.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Isn't that where you usually sit, Hoody?

BOBBY/HOODY

I'm going to teach him about pain if he don't get his transistorized butt out of my chair.

(Louis tries to rise, Bobby pushes him back into the seat.)

HOPE

There's plenty of room.

BOBBY/HOODY

Yo, you're in my seat, flathead.

(Pause. Louis is trying to see the cue card behind Bobby.)

I said, you're in my seat, flathead.

(Louis tries to move Bobby out of the way. Bobby slaps his hand.)

BOBBY

What do you think you're doing?

CELESTE

I knew something like this was going to happen.

HOPE

Let's remember where we are, folks.

CELESTE

I can't say my line unless he gives the cue.

BOBBY

Look, Bozo, you need to move your bones.

(Carp gets Bobby's attention and makes him aware that he's blocking the cards.)

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

I am like rubber, you are glue; names bounce off of me and stick to you.

CELESTE/SNAKE

Okay...He's calling you flathead right back at you.

(Bobby tries to get Louis to rise. Again he is blocking the cue cards.)

HOPE

Leave him alone, Hoody.

(Bobby grabs Louis's shirt.)

That's not necessary.

BOBBY

He should've moved.

(Louis grabs Bobby in a wrist lock and moves him out of the way.)

LOUIS

(reading the cue card to himself)

Options, A) Attack B) Ignore C) Negotiate D) Report to authorities.

CELESTE

What's going on?

BOBBY

Get off of me.

CARP

What am I seeing?

(Bobby struggles and falls to the floor.)

CELESTE

Are you alright?

HOPE

What in the world were you thinking?

CARP

Keep it together, People, we're live.

BOBBY

Not for long cause I'm gonna kill that kid.

CARP

Somebody get me out of this.

We're completely off text.
CELESTE

He's not a kid, he's a robot.
HOPE

He's gonna be autoparts when I get through with him.
BOBBY

I don't know what they're saying...
CELESTE

Sit down and shut up, Celeste!
CARP

(Celeste meditates.)

Twenty seconds till commercial.
BERNIE

He's a non-violent robot.
HOPE

He nearly broke my wrist.
BOBBY

It must be a glitch in his programming; we'll get it fixed.
HOPE

I'm gonna fix him myself, with a Fungo upside his bongo head.
BOBBY

Ten seconds...
BERNIE

(to Louis)
You listen and you listen good!
BOBBY

You need to stop and think before you go too far.
HOPE

The only thing I've got to do is put this scene stealing chump in his place cause I'm from the old school...
BOBBY

CARP

Cut!!! Roll commercial.

BOBBY

...so there ain't no way this creep is gonna come in here steppin' on my lines and making me look bad because I will go to war!

CELESTE

I told you something like this was going to happen.

CARP

Bobby, just what was all that?

BOBBY

This ham here ruined the scene.

HOPE

If that ain't the hot-dog calling the bacon pork.

BOBBY

(to Louis)

Man, I ought to knock you out.

CARP

I will handle this.

BOBBY

Hooody's the gangster. Mech-Boy's the nerd. How do you think it looks for him to lay me out in the cafeteria?

CARP

I know, I will handle this.

BERNIE

Don't forget to hang up your old costumes.

BOBBY

(to Louis)

You better clean up your act, Bud.

CARP

Bobby, I am the director, I will handle this.

BOBBY

I need a smoke.

CARP

(to Louis)

Just what is it that you call yourself doing?

LOUIS

What do you mean?

CARP

Mech-Boy can't pound a kid over a cafeteria chair.

BERNIE

He just did, and a quarter of a million people saw it.

CELESTE

That's what happens when you work with amateurs.

CARP

(to Celeste)

Go find something to do.

BERNIE

Three minutes.

CARP

(to Louis)

Why didn't you read the cue cards?

LOUIS

I did, except for when "Mr. Good Side" kept standing right in front of them.

CARP

Mech-Boy wasn't supposed to beat up on anybody.

LOUIS

I saw four choices and picked the one that made the most sense.

CARP

That's not a menu; it's your line. Mech-Boy gets attacked and says, "Options: A) attack B) ignore C) negotiate D) report to authorities." Then on the next card he says, "We will let the authorized school representative arbitrate the conflict."

LOUIS

I'm supposed to go to the lunch monitor because some jerk wants my chair?

CARP

Exactly.

LOUIS

Why would I possibly do that?

CARP

Because that's what parents want to see him do and the sponsors want the parents to watch my show because they have jobs and can afford to buy the garbage that we sell them every seven minutes.

LOUIS

Yeah, but parents aren't the one's getting killed so unless your show deals with real ways to get out of a scuffle then it ain't about nothing.

CARP

You let me worry about the show; I'm paying you five hundred smackers to read exactly what's on the cue cards and act like a non-violent robot. Do you think you can do that? If not then tell me now so I can find somebody who can...Okay, that's settled. Time?

BERNIE

Two and a quarter.

LOUIS

(to Hope)

Is the whole show going to be corny like this?

HOPE

It's probably better for him to report to somebody than for him to start breaking wrists.

LOUIS

Sometimes, and sometimes telling somebody starts more trouble than it ends so you ignore the whole thing or maybe try to joke your way out of it. The choice aren't simple.

HOPE

They are on TV.

CELESTE

Say your lines and don't bump into the furniture. As an untrained actor that's about the best you can hope for.

BOBBY

You want simple, I'll give you simple. Step on my line and I step on you.

HOPE

He's just a kid.

BOBBY

I don't care if he's the Golden Child, get in my way again and he's history.

HOPE

Is that your Nicholas Cage impression or Homer Simpson?

BOBBY

Just don't try me.

CARP

(to Bernie)

Why aren't we set up for scene two?

HOPE

(to Louis)

Don't pay him any mind.

BERNIE

(to Carp)

I thought that you might want to make some changes considering that the kid acted more like Hulk Hogan than like Mech-Boy.

CARP

You don't think. You just do whatever I told you to do until I tell you to stop doing it and do something else. Is that clear?

BERNIE

Crystal.

(Bernie begins dressing the set to look like a school hallway.)

CELESTE

(to Bernie)

I hope we aren't planning on making any changes.

BERNIE

I just work here.

CELESTE

I'm not trying to be difficult but you see I was raised in a large military family and I became accustomed to order and so I'm perhaps not as spontaneous as the other actors...

BERNIE

Excuse me, Celeste, but I don't quite have enough time to hear your entire life story, again.

CARP

(to Hope)

Between us, Luv, you're the only one out of this bunch who I can count on.

HOPE

Just doing my job.

CARP

If this series gets picked up a lot of good things are going to happen for me and for you too, if you play your cards right. Now, what I need is for you and Mech-bonehead to improv a tiny bit at the top of this next scene where you tell him to keep away from Hoody and if he gets cornered then he can't lose his head. I'll give you about thirty seconds then we'll get back on text with the kid's line about life being too long...yadda yadda yadda. Do you think you can do that, Hon?

HOPE

Sure I can, Hon.

CARP

Super.

HOPE

But go easy on the Kid. He's new at this.

BERNIE

Thirty seconds.

CARP

Whatever. Places people. Move it. Move it...Mech-Boy. Mech-Boy. Yo, Kid! Goldilocks is gonna make up a few lines at the top of the next scene to get us back on track. You don't say nothing, you hear? You watch me and you do what I do. Got it?

LOUIS

Got it.

CARP

Not one word until I get you back on the cue cards. And try to move a little more like a machine out there. Here we go!

BERNIE

Scene two in six, five, four....

HOPE

I'm not trying to tell you what to do, okay?

(Carp nods, "Yes." Louis nods, "Yes.")

But there are rules out here, unwritten rules and one way or another everybody has to deal with them. Do you understand?

(Carp shakes his head, "No." Louis shakes his head, "No.")

Take for instance that guy they call Hoody. You pushed him in the lunchroom last week, remember?

(Carp nods, "Yes." Louis nods, "Yes.")

So what do you think will happen now?

(Carp shrugs his shoulders. Louis shrugs his shoulders.)

He'll want revenge. You embarrassed him in front of everybody. He'll get laughed at and teased until he'll think that he has to do something. And then what will you do?

(Carp indicates for Louis to read the cue card but Louis simply repeats the gesture.)

If you're smart you'll let him run his mouth until he runs down.

CARP

Read the cue card!

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

Oh. Life is too long to make enemies and too short to lose friends.

HOPE

I couldn't agree more.

(They hug. Enter Bobby as Hoody.)

BOBBY/HOODY

Aw. Isn't that sweet. The girl and the Go-bot.

HOPE

Why don't you grow up?

BOBBY/HOODY

Because then I couldn't play with toys like my little metal buddy here.

HOPE

Just leave him alone.

BOBBY/HOODY

If I was to let this geek get away with dissing me then every no dressing fool in the whole school would try to step to me.

HOPE

Give it a rest, Hoody, before it gets out of hand.

BOBBY/HOODY

Aw, go brush your teeth or something. This is between me and the junkman.

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me.

BOBBY/HOODY

So if I was to say that your breath smells like motor oil that wouldn't bother you.

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

No.

HOPE

Good for you.

BOBBY/HOODY

And if I was to say that your head looks like something off of *Tales From The Crypt*, what would you say?

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

Thank you.

BOBBY/HOODY

Thank you?

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

You are welcome.

BOBBY/HOODY

Is he buggin' or what?

HOPE

Mech-Boy's smart enough to know that you're trying to get a rise out of him and so he beats you if he doesn't respond.

BOBBY/HOODY

Either that or his daddy had the I.Q. of a toaster so he doesn't know how...

LOUIS

Yo, we're not gonna go there.

CARP

That's not the line, is it?

No it's not. **BERNIE**

Don't get cute. **BOBBY/HOODY**

Stick to the script. **CARP**

My pop's dead, man. **LOUIS**

Unless you want to join him then you'd better get yourself together. **BOBBY**

This is not the way this is supposed to go. **CARP**

Thirty seconds. **BERNIE**

Remember, sticks and stones... **HOPE**

That's all well and good but there ain't no way I'm gonna let some Johnny Depp wannabe put his mouth on my dead father. **LOUIS**

You need to watch your mouth. **BOBBY**

Somebody read a cue card. **CARP**

It's only words. **HOPE**

A whole lot of people have let their mouths run their behinds into the cemetery. **BOBBY**

But we're smarter than that, right? **HOPE**

What are you trying to say? **BOBBY**

HOPE

I'm saying that we have better things to do than stand around trying to insult each other.

CARP

Are they on text?

(Bernie nods, "Yes.")

BOBBY/HOODY

The only thing I've got to do is make sure this chump doesn't get in my grill again.

BERNIE

Five seconds.

HOPE

What about trying to get an education?

BOBBY/HOODY

Don't worry, I'm gonna school your friend before long.

LOUIS/MECH-BOY

I'm not looking for trouble.

BOBBY/HOODY

But you've got it.

CARP

Cut. Roll commercial.

BOBBY

What do you mean, "cut?" I didn't do my big speech.

BERNIE

With the addition at the beginning and the screw up in the middle we were running late.

BOBBY

But that's my best monologue in the whole show.

BERNIE

Welcome to live TV. Costumes on the rack, please!

BOBBY

(to Louis)

Alright, punk, you listen good...

BERNIE

Hey, now.

HOPE

Who you calling a punk, punk?

BOBBY

What are you, his fairy godmother?

CELESTE

All of this dissension between scenes is making it impossible for me to prepare properly.

BOBBY

Well you know what you can do with your preparation.

CARP

Quiet! I've had it up to here with the nonsense on this set. Everybody is going to close their mouths, change their costumes and set up to roll the next scene.

BERNIE

Three minutes.

CELESTE

This has got to be the most unprofessional project I have ever worked.

LOUIS

Look, I'm sorry I messed up; I'm not used to this acting stuff.

HOPE

(to Bobby)

What's your excuse?

BOBBY

Didn't nothing ever come easy for Bobby Cloy so don't expect me to give ground to some no talent scene stealing kid who gets the lead role handed to him on a silver platter.

HOPE

If I didn't know better I'd think you were jealous.

BOBBY

Go smoke a cigarette.

(Bobby walks away.)

HOPE

You okay?

LOUIS

Yeah, it's just that some words hurt even if you know they aren't real.

CARP

Listen up, people. We had a few problems again in scene two but we still can run three exactly as planned.

CELESTE

Yesss!!

(Everyone looks at her.)

I'm terrible at improv.

CARP

Mech-bungle, you come in left and meet Snake.

LOUIS

That sounds easy enough.

CARP

Don't get cocky, you haven't done anything right yet today.

HOPE

Give the Kid a break, he never even had a chance to read the script through.

BOBBY

Let him upstage me again and I'll give him a break.

CELESTE

(to Louis)

You need to build an imaginary history for your character. Who were your parents, childhood friends, what is your favorite flavor ice cream...

CARP

Don't worry about that crap. I want you to remember one thing and one thing only; you take the gun then give it back.

LOUIS

What gun?

CELESTE

In this next scene I'm going to try to convince you to take a gun.

CARP

Do you mind?

LOUIS

Why would I need a gun?

CARP

Exactly! You don't need a gun; so you look at it, think better of it then give it back.

BERNIE

Ninety seconds.

LOUIS

But I don't get it, why would Snake offer me a gun?

CELESTE

Because Snake wants to see a good fight.

LOUIS

There are a whole lot of little steps between a tussle in the lunchroom and borrowing a gun.

BERNIE

Not in a half hour show there aren't.

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