

Outrage – Readers’ Theater

Connor has just been accused of robbing a corner store. Earlier in the day, he was in a fight with a classmate. His face is badly bruised. He just came into the store to buy a frozen Coke, but now the police think he did the robbery.

APPROXIMATE GRADE LEVELS: 7-12

THE NOVEL IN BRIEF: Seventeen-year-old Connor has had a rough day. He’s been kicked out of school and punched out by a buddy. Then he’s blamed for a robbery after the real thief has gotten away. Connor needs to find him, but it won’t be easy. Nothing ever is for Connor.

PERFORMING NOTES:

Chicken Lips is a strict, no-nonsense type. Connor has a bit of an attitude. His cellmate Nate has even more of an attitude.

Connor has the most lines, but they’re all relatively easy. The sound effects can be done by one dedicated person, student actors, or the entire group. The written sounds (onomatopoeia) are spelled out in the text.* Students also can use objects (e.g. hitting a ruler or bike lock against a desk for the sound of the jail door) or recorded sound from the Internet.

Narrator 1 (13 lines)
Narrator 2 (13 lines)
Connor (21 lines)
Chicken Lips (9 lines)
Nate (14 lines)

SOUND EFFECTS: sirens, yelping in pain, car starting, laughter, jail door closing, banging on bars of cell

See www.writtensound.com for a terrific website about onomatopoeia.

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Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Connor -- a teenage boy with attitude

Chicken Lips: a police officer

Nate: Connor's cellmate

SOUND EFFECTS: sirens, yelping in pain, car starting, laughter, jail door closing, banging on bars of cell

NARRATOR 1: This Reader's Theater play is adapted from the novel *Outrage* by Tony Varrato. Today's actors are:

NARRATOR 2: Police cars pulled up to the corner store. It had just been robbed.

(sound effect: sirens -- eeee, eeee, eeee, eeee)

NARRATOR 1: When the cops arrived, Connor protested.

CONNOR: Hey, you've got the wrong guy!

NARRATOR 2: The cops drew their weapons.

CHICKEN LIPS: Kneel down!

CONNOR *(louder)*: I told you, you've got the wrong guy!

CHICKEN LIPS: Kneel down and keep your mouth shut!

NARRATOR 1: They checked Connor for weapons. Then they cuffed him.

NARRATOR 2: Connor yelled in pain when the cop pulled him to his feet. His shoulder hurt badly.

(sound effect: Connor yelping in pain -- owwww!)

NARRATOR 1: Connor fit in one more, “You’ve got the wrong guy” before the policeman held his head and pushed him into the back of the car.

CHICKEN LIPS: Want to tell me what you did?

NARRATOR 2: The cop’s lips stuck off his face kind of like a chicken’s beak.

CONNOR: I’m innocent!

NARRATOR 1: Chicken Lips said nothing and started the car.

(sound effect: car starting -- vrrrooom, vrooom, vrooom)

NARRATOR 2: Connor thought the cop hadn’t heard him. So he slowed the words down for him.

CONNOR: I ... didn’t ... do ... anything.

NARRATOR 1: Chicken Lips lifted the object that he had thrown on the seat. It was an old-style video cassette.

CHICKEN LIPS: This tape says you did.

NARRATOR 2: A few minutes later, they arrived at the police station.

NARRATOR 1: Chicken Lips got busy typing at a computer. Connor figured since the guy was part chicken he should be good at pecking those keys.

NARRATOR 2: Connor smiled a little. Sometimes his own jokes cracked himself up.

(sound effect: Connor laughs -- Ha)

CHICKEN LIPS: Something funny?

CONNOR: Uh ... no.

CHICKEN LIPS: You sure? I like a good laugh.

CONNOR: Look, I had nothing to do with robbing that store.

CHICKEN LIPS: Save it. *(pause)* Name?

CONNOR: Connor Mullins

CHICKEN LIPS: Age?

CONNOR: Seventeen.

NARRATOR 1: When all the paperwork was finished, Chicken Lips stuck Connor in a holding cell. The jail door slammed shut.

(sound effect: jail door closing -- clink! or hitting a ruler/ bike lock against a desk)

NARRATOR 2: Connor lay down on the bench and put an ice pack on his eyes. There was one other guy in the cell. The other guy asked....

NATE: What did you do?

NARRATOR 1: Connor was too tired to answer.

NATE *(louder)*: Hey! What did you do?

CONNOR: I didn't do nothin'

NATE *(sarcastically)*: Yeah, you look like you didn't do nothin.' I'm guessing that you fought a couple of cops. Or maybe just one cop who really didn't like you much.

CONNOR: All I did was try to buy a frozen Coke. Then they arrest me for robbing the store.

NATE: (laughing) Look, man, I'm not a cop or a lawyer. I'm just trying to pass some time. If you want to be a jerk and not talk to me, then okay, whatever! (grunt) You don't get a face like that and a ripped shirt just by buying a frozen Coke.

CONNOR: I loved this shirt!

NATE: Well, then stay away from those frozen Cokes. They've been known to rip clothes and pop you in the face a couple of times.

NARRATOR 2: Connor wasn't in the mood to laugh, but he liked the kid's attitude.

CONNOR: What's your name?

NATE: Nate. Yours?

CONNOR: Connor.

NATE: So tell me what happened to your face.

CONNOR: Fight at school. I got suspended this morning.

NATE: You go to Edgemont?

CONNOR: Yeah, but I'm on vacation right now.

NATE: Yeah, I thought I'd seen you before. No offense, but your hair kind of stands out.

CONNOR: Are you a senior?

NATE (nodding): Yeah, but I'm on vacation, too. So tell me how this frozen Coke messed you up.

NARRATOR 1: Connor told him about the school fight, his boss, the parking lot fight, and the robbery.

NARRATOR 2: Then Connor turned to Nate and asked...

CONNOR: So why are you here?

NATE (*jokingly*): Well, I was buying this frozen Coke... (*pause*) (*voice gets softer and more serious*) Actually, I stole a car. Three days ago, I woke up and decided it was time for a road trip. So I went down a street, found an unlocked car with keys, and took off. I love the open road.

CONNOR: How'd you get caught?

NATE: Speeding. Doing 90 in a 35 zone.

CONNOR: Are you going to fight it?

NATE: Nah, not too much to fight. The police cars have video recorders. They've got me speeding and getting out of the driver's seat.

CONNOR: They tell me I'm on video, too. But that's impossible since I didn't actually do it.

NATE (*sarcastically*): Yeah, right. That's what you keep saying.

(*sound effect: banging on bars of cell -- clink! clink! clink! or hitting a ruler/bike chain against a desk*)

NARRATOR 1: It was Chicken Lips banging on the cell bars.

CHICKEN LIPS: Your dad's here.

CONNOR: Really?

NARRATOR 2: Chicken Lips didn't answer. He just opened the cage and jerked his thumb toward the door.

(*ominous closing music*)