



THE SAFETY

An Original One Act

by

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Directed by Patrick Kelly

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STANFORD
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THE SAFETY

A One Act Play

CHARACTER NAME BRIEF DESCRIPTION GENDER

TOMMY Young businessman Male
THE GUNMAN Robber in over his head Male
SAM Stressed over planning a surprise party Female
KARLA Airheaded but well-intentioned, likes Phil Female
MAE An actual, rational human being Female
JAKE Drunk bro just trying to have a good night Male
PHIL Mellow bro with something resembling intellect Male
RON Married to Elena, cautious Male
ELENA Pregnant, terrified Female
DANICA Elena's friend, never going out with her again Female
JOHN Tommy's business partner, shady Male
LAST GUEST #1 Normal unsuspecting person Male
LAST GUEST #2 Normal unsuspecting person Female

A city apartment at night. A couch and a coffee table.
Lights are dim. In the living room, TOMMY, mid-20s
and in business attire, paces, talking to himself. He holds
a handgun.

TOMMY

You should have thought about that. Oh, yeah? You should have thought about that. No,
no. More. Is that so? Well, ain't that a fucking shame. God damn it, that's bad. Wait--
(TOMMY stops, then raises the gun and
extends his arm fully.)

Well, there's one thing you forgot to take: this bullet.

(He resumes pacing, psyched up.)

Yes. Yes. This is it, asshole. You asked for it. Alright, gotta get ready. Should be moving
out. Let's see.

(He checks his pockets. All good. He checks
the gun.

HALTS.)

Oh, shit. The safety's on; good thing I caught that now.

(Pulls on it. No use.)

The hell?

(Wiggles it. Pulls with all his strength.

Nothing.)

Fuck! It's fucking stuck! What good is a gun if it can't kill? Fucking safety.

(He goes back to the gun.

Meanwhile, the doorknob begins to move. It
soon catches Tommy's attention. He turns

toward the door.)
What the hell is that?
(The door unlocks.)
Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit.
(Tommy hides behind a couch.
Enter the GUNMAN, a masked man,
currently unarmed. He tip toes into the
house and quietly moves toward the living
room. He begins to go through drawers.
Tommy pokes his head out from behind the
couch and observes.)

GUNMAN
Come on, buddy. I know you got something for me.
(The gunman finds a SILVER WATCH.)
Well, that's a start.
(He continues his search.
Tommy has had enough of this guy. He
comes out with his gun raised.)

TOMMY
Don't move.
(The gunman's soul leaps out of him. He
stands FROZEN.)
Turn around.
(The gunman turns slowly.)

GUNMAN
Look, man. We don't have to start something here.

TOMMY
Oh it's started. You interrupted it. I don't know who you are or what the fuck your deal
is, but, lucky for you, I can't afford to sit around talking to the cops tonight. That means
you're going to go right now, and you're never going to come back because if you do, I'll
put a hole in that sock around your head. Like, while you're wearing it. Got it?
(The gunman nods.)
Then let's get going.
(Tommy motions toward the door. The
gunman starts walking.)

TOMMY
No, asshole. Without my stuff.

GUNMAN
Oh. Sorry.
(He puts the silver watch back down, then

starts walking again.
They get to the door, then Tommy stops.)

TOMMY
Wait. It's still early... Why did you come here now? Unarmed?

GUNMAN
...I didn't expect you to be here tonight.
(Tommy thinks for a moment.)

TOMMY
I know you, don't I? Or rather, you know me.

GUNMAN
I don't think so. No.

TOMMY
Why did you think I'd be out? Why tonight? It's my birthday. But I get the feeling you know that. I saw you enter. You've never actually been in this apartment, have you? So... where do we know each other from?

GUNMAN
Is it your birthday? Happy birthday man.

TOMMY
Cut the shit. You said, "I know you got something for me." Could just be an expression. But I think you expected to find valuables here. You didn't know what they might be, but you knew there had to be some. You probably know me from work, but I don't work with you. You don't make half as much. How close am I?

GUNMAN
I don't know what you're talking about.

TOMMY
Oh, I think you do. The list is getting really short by the way. Now, why target me? Lot of people in the office. You don't just want someone's things. You want my things. I offended you or mistreated you.

GUNMAN
Shut up.
(Tommy laughs.)

TOMMY
Oh man, this is great. Hey, I'm just fucking with you.

GUNMAN

Can I go now?

TOMMY

Sure. You should go. We can catch up more next time I see you.... Tuesdays and Thursdays? Unless for some reason you can't make it...

(The gunman is SEETHING. He takes a moment.)

So you going or what?

(The gunman snaps. He LUNGES toward Tommy and wrestles the gun away.

He holds the gun up to Tommy, who is completely relaxed.)

Okay, props to you. That was quick. But you know what the funniest part about this is? You knew something I didn't. Then we were even. And now, I know something you don't.

GUNMAN

You talk a lot for a guy with a gun to his face.

(Tommy laughs.)

TOMMY

Yeah, that should probably tell you something. You can't use that--

(The gunman, furious, STRIKES Tommy with the butt of the gun and KNOCKS HIM OUT.)

GUNMAN

Shut up!

(The gunman stands over Tommy's unconscious body.

He takes a deep breath and drags Tommy's body to the living room. He then drops the body and starts to have a small PANIC ATTACK.)

Oh God. Oh my God. Oh, no, no, no, no. I'm screwed. I'm so screwed. Why? I'm so stupid! Breaking and entering, and now assault! Oh God.

(He paces with the gun, like Tommy earlier, but scared.

Again, the doorknob starts to move. The pacing stops.)

Oh my God....

(The door opens and three young women, SAM, KARLA, and MAE, enter the apartment. They go to flip the lights on, and the gunman, like a cockroach, scurries looking for a hiding place, but fails.

He stands over Tommy, masked and holding a gun.)
Shit. It's not what it looks like.

SAM
Uhhh, guys? What the hell is that?
(She points to Tommy's unconscious body.)

KARLA
Uhhh.....
(Beat.)

SAM
What the hell is he still doing here? Whose job was it to keep him out of the house?

KARLA
I thought it was your job.

SAM
Karla, I'm right here. How could it possibly have been my job?

KARLA
Oh. Well, whose job was it?

SAM
That's what I'm asking you! God, how am I supposed to plan a party with helpers like this?

MAE
I'm sorry -- am I the only one who sees the guy with the mask? And the gun?

SAM
Oh great. Did you invite more people without telling me?

KARLA
Not me; I don't know who that guy is.

MAE
Guys! He has a gun!

GUNMAN
I have a gun? Oh shit, I have a gun!
(Everything STOPS. The girls now turn their attention to the gunman.
They all stand quietly in something of an awkward, passive standoff.)

MAE

So how about calling the police?

(The gunman jerks at this.)

GUNMAN

No! No police!

SAM

(To Karla.)

Agreed. The party hasn't even started.

GUNMAN

The three of you come over here. Stand in that corner. And put your phones on the table there!

(He points instructions.)

Slowly and quietly!

(The girls comply.)

MAE

May we speak?

GUNMAN

What?

MAE

What's happening here? ...Are we gonna die?

GUNMAN

What? No! I mean, not as long as you do what you're told. Now please just be quiet.

(The gunman puts his free hand up to his head, keeping the gun on the girls. The girls stand there, fidgeting.

He takes a deep breath, which is cut short by a knock at the door.)

GUNMAN

Oh, what now? Just go away!

SAM

That's probably more guests.

GUNMAN

Please tell me what you're talking about and nothing more.

SAM

(Proudly.)

It's a surprise party. I pretty much planned the whole thing.

GUNMAN

Yeah, that's not really helping your chances right now.

(Another knock, louder. He motions for everyone to be quiet.

Beat.

The door opens. Two bros, JAKE and PHIL, enter the apartment. They have both clearly pre-gamed the surprise party set-up.

They each have a six-pack.)

JAKE

Yo, it's Jake and Phil! Ya'll can come out or whatever.

(Jake walks up to the living room area and "closely" assesses the situation.

He bends down to look at Tommy, passed out on the floor.)

Oh shit. He's out already? What a champ.

PHIL

Cool party.

KARLA

Hi Phil!

(She waves excitedly but gets no reaction.

The gunman has to process these people for a second, then snaps back.)

GUNMAN

Alright, enough!

(He points to the two bros. They finally notice the gun.)

You two! Just shut up. Don't talk, and nobody will get hurt, okay? Now put your phones and your beer on the table.

JAKE

Right on.

(They both set down their beer and head over to where the girls are.)

GUNMAN

I said phones too. Seriously, that was the only part that mattered.

JAKE

Oh, no way bro. I'm racking up some mad points on *Angry Birds* before I get too trashed. It's like, with each beer I drink, I got one less bird left over after a level.

PHIL

Here, you can use mine. I'm trying to limit my technology dependency anyway, you know?

GUNMAN

No, I don't know, and no, I need both of your phones. Now! On the table!

(They both add their phones to the pile.

The five guests look at each other for a moment, then at the gunman, still thinking.)

PHIL

So like, is Tommy dead?

KARLA

Wait, Tommy's dead?

MAE

Seriously? He's been on the floor this whole time.

GUNMAN

Nobody's dead! He's just out for a bit.

MAE

Really? Then what's going on here?

GUNMAN

I need time to figure out what to do, okay? And until I know, you're all going to stay there quietly.

MAE

What to do about what? Just leave! You haven't hurt anyone. We promise we won't call the cops on you if you'll just go.

GUNMAN

Do you think I'm stupid? It's not that simple. He recognized me. He knows who I am. I can't afford to get arrested for breaking into this guy's home and beating him with his own gun.

JAKE

Whoa. I just realized this is probably going to be my coolest drunk story ever.

SAM

This has nothing to do with you being drunk, idiot.

JAKE

No, don't you get it? I just peaked. It's like, why even get drunk anymore?

(Jake shakes his head.)

Man. I need a drink.

(Suddenly, everyone notices that Tommy is wobbling his way back onto his feet.

He looks around, perplexed.)

GUESTS

Surprise!

(Beat.

The gunman KNOCKS HIM OUT once more.)

MAE

What the hell was that?

SAM

Well, this party's a disaster.

PHIL

Dude, brutality.

GUNMAN

Now you see! That's the situation, okay? If he gets up, he'll talk.

(A SILENCE)

MAE

So what are you saying?

GUNMAN

I think you know. It'd be better if he wasn't going to talk. If he couldn't talk.

(He waves the gun at the guests menacingly to make his point.

Once more, he is startled by a KNOCK at the door.)

Oh, come on! More?

SAM

They're late.

GUNMAN

Okay, no more of this.

(He points to Sam.)

You! You're going to tell them there is no party, and they should go. And if anyone says

anything or does anything else, she dies. Followed by you. Got it?

(They nod. Again, KNOCKING is heard.

The gunman walks Sam to the door and takes his position behind it, gun fixed on Sam. She opens the door.)

SAM

Oh, hey guys. So glad you could make it on time. Oh, and you brought your own friend and didn't tell me! That's great.

(Impatient, the gunman holds his gun right up to Sam's head.)

Oh, uh, by the way, party's cancelled. As of right now. I just cancelled. No, really!

(She tries to cover the door, but the three guests come in anyway. They are a couple, RON and ELENA, who is noticeably pregnant, and DANICA.)

DANICA

Calm down, we're not that late.

(The three newcomers see Tommy, the cornered guests, and then Sam and the gunman. Sam shuts the door.)

RON

Oh shit.

GUNMAN

Too late. Over with the others, phones on the table. Move.

(Everyone moves back to the living room.

The hostages crowd together.)

And no more guests!

JAKE

Why don't you just lock the door? Basic stuff, bro.

GUNMAN

...Good idea. From you? Wow.

SAM

Won't work. I made copies of the key for everyone.

JAKE

Oh yeah. I lost mine.

GUNMAN

And there it is. You're still an idiot. Anyway, what? You went out and distributed copies

of this man's apartment key? To these people?

SAM

It's a surprise party. I wanted to make sure everyone could get in. How'd you get in?

GUNMAN

I actually had to pick the lock. Much harder. And holy crap, I'm surprised this hadn't happened sooner with friends like you running around.

RON

Hi, sorry to interrupt. I'm Ron, I'm new to the group, and I just wanted to ask WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

MAE

This guy's going to kill Tommy.
(The three new guests, Jake, and Karla GASP at this revelation.)

GUNMAN

Okay, we had a couple reactions there from people who are not new, but that's fine.

RON

Why kill him? He's clearly no threat right now.

GUNMAN

He knows too much. Long story short, I can't let him turn me in.

RON

You realize if you kill him your crimes only get that much worse, right?

GUNMAN

Of course! This isn't easy. I just think maybe if I do it I won't get caught.
(Beat.)

RON

Okay, so are you going to do it?

GUNMAN

Yes! It's just-- It's hard! I need time to prepare.

RON

Really? I'll do it for you if you want.

GUNMAN

...Seriously?

RON

Yeah, absolutely. Here, just give me the gun.
(The gunman goes to give Ron the gun, but stops just before handing it over.)

GUNMAN

Hey, wait a minute!
(He pulls back.)
Nice try. I'm gonna be watching you.
(Everyone is startled by the sound of Tommy GRUNTING.
He's back on his feet.)

TOMMY

Wow. That's a headache. What did I do last night?
(He sees the hostages.)
Oh no. Is this an intervention?
(The gunman KNOCKS HIM DOWN yet again.)

PHIL

Dude, I'm not a doctor, but that's probably not gonna help his headache.

GUNMAN

Yeah, neither will a bullet.
(The gunman begins to shake, restless.)
Damn it. I need to pee.

PHIL

Oh, dude, you know what's a cool trick if you need to pee but can't? Think about sex stuff. Like, just focus on dirty sex and get hard and stuff. Your body will postpone peeing 'cause, like, sex is obviously way more important.

KARLA

Obviously.

PHIL

It's like, I mean you gotta walk around with a hard-on, but at least you don't have to pee, you know? Quid pro quo. It's a trade off. It's totally true too, seriously, I read it on... Science... Thing. Online, but, you know, it's still reading.

GUNMAN

Please stop talking. You!
(He points to the pregnant Elena.)
Come with me. I'm going to pee in that corner, and if anyone makes a move, you'll be killing both her and her baby. I am at the end of my rope here, so don't test me.

(He unzips and does his business in the corner while the hostages wait. Meanwhile, Tommy stands up once more.)

TOMMY

Hey guys. Whoa. Gun. Where am I? What time is it?

(The gunman hurries to finish and put Elena back.)

Hostage sitch? Wait, is that my gun? Oh shit, now I remember. Why hasn't anyone taken that thing away from him? It's totally safe.

GUNMAN

Shut up!

(He points the gun at Tommy, but keeps a safe distance.)

JAKE

Tommy. Bro. No offense, but you probably got like three concussions right now. Just quiet down.

TOMMY

No, I'm completely serious. The safety's on, and it's stuck.

(The entire mood changes in the room.

Everyone turns to the gunman.)

GUNMAN

No way.

(The gunman finds the safety, wiggles it, the pulls very hard until it's free.)

There we go. Safety's off. We're all good.

(Everyone MOANS.)

TOMMY

What? How'd you get it, there's no way. Let me see.

(He walks over to the gunman.)

GUNMAN

Yeah, it's easy. You gotta put some strength into it.

(As the gunman is demonstrating, Tommy

DECKS HIM and pulls the gun away.)

TOMMY

Why don't you put some strength into that, asshole.

(Tommy is standing over the gunman, when

everyone's heads turn to see another guest

arrive. Startled, Tommy aims his gun at the

door.

Enter JOHN, another well-off business type. He sees Tommy with his gun trained on him.)

JOHN

Whoa! Tommy! I was hoping we could be civil for at least one more night. I mean, it is your birthday.

TOMMY

What? Oh, the gun.

(John quickly pulls out his own gun and aims it at Tommy.

Everyone GASPS.)

MAE

For Christ's sake! What now?

JOHN

Hey, don't look at me. I was all ready to throw this surprise party and have a great time. But it looks like Tommy here had other plans.

TOMMY

Yeah, I did actually. I was going to go out and find you earlier so we could settle this, but some idiot broke in and stopped me.

JOHN

And now here we are.

(The gunman crawls away from Tommy and gets back on his feet.)

TOMMY

You don't wanna do this here, John. Someone could get hurt.

JOHN

Well, that was the idea, right? Why else greet me with a gun?

TOMMY

You don't understand what's happened here. Hell, I don't understand what's happened here. Actually, does anyone understand what's happened here?

GUNMAN

Um, I think I'm just missing this thing going on between you two right now and then I got the whole picture. Just saying.

JOHN

Tommy here is a greedy, violent man. We're in business together -- you don't need to concern yourself with the nature of it -- but our friend here thinks he's been treated unfairly.

TOMMY

That's because you did fuck me. You fucked me, and now all you need to do is unfuck me and, maybe, you might just unfuck yourself.

(Beat.)

JOHN

Did somebody pee in here?

TOMMY

I was just about to ask that.

GUNMAN

Oh yeah, that was me. That's why I couldn't knock you out when you woke up. I peed right there.

(He points.)

TOMMY

Not on my carpet, man!

GUNMAN

I was under stress!

TOMMY

We all are! Every one of us in this room!

JOHN

If you want, I can make it real peaceful for you.

(John extends his arm and takes aim to show he means business.

Everyone stands quietly, tense. Then--)

GUNMAN

Stop!

(Heads turn toward the gunman.)

Nobody needs to shoot anybody. John didn't screw you over.

TOMMY

What?

(SILENCE.)

GUNMAN

It wasn't him. That's why he thinks you're being greedy. He still thinks you got your

share.

JAKE

Whoa. This is kind of amazing. I don't even know how to describe it.

JOHN

(About the gunman.)

Who is this guy?

GUNMAN

You were right about me. I hear a lot of things around the office, and a few other people have too. You're running a nasty scam out of your office. You think you're being clever, but you forget about people like us. People who work for you, not with you. Some got wind of it, and your share got picked up. I knew there was money to take from you, but I didn't really understand until I heard you two going off in here. Now I know.

TOMMY

Tell me who.

GUNMAN

I can do better than that. But I won't.

(Beat.)

TOMMY

What do you want?

GUNMAN

I want safety. And I want a cut, for everyone in this room. We all forget what happened here, you go on running your white-collar swindles, I'll be a lookout for you, nobody hurts anyone, and everybody's happy.

MAE

I don't know how I feel about--

GUNMAN

It's a lot of money.

MAE

Okay.

GUNMAN

I think that's a fair deal for everyone.

(DEAD SILENCE.

Tommy and John remain locked in a standoff.

Then finally, Tommy lowers his gun. John

does the same.)

TOMMY

Okay. Do we all agree?

(Everyone looks at each other nervously for a moment.

Finally, heads start nodding.)

Then that's that. Pleasure doing business with all of you.

(John and Tommy's guns are concealed at last. Everyone shares a sigh of relief.)

JOHN

So now what?

PHIL

There's beer on the table.

SAM

Party time? Yes!

(The girls jump and cheer, and slowly people relax. Karla runs up to Phil and jumps him.

The door opens and TWO MORE GUESTS arrive. They see a fairly normal-looking gathering of friends.)

LAST GUEST #1

Hey, sorry we're late. Did we miss anything?

JAKE

Bro, such a sick party. I got a cool drunk story, Phil somehow ended up getting some, someone peed on the floor, and Tommy passed out like three times. Glorious night.

SAM

No, the party's just getting started.

(All of the guests and Tommy move to the living room area as if nothing happened.

The gunman watches by the door. As he turns to leave, he reaches up to pull off his mask. But before we see his face--)

LIGHTS OUT.