

GET THE HELL OFF
An 8-page stage play by
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LOGLINE for GET THE HELL OFF

A mother's dim wit, a child's mischievous behavior and a father's blasé attitude on child rearing clash in harrowing experience that has the mother close to a nervous breakdown.

SYNOPSIS for GET THE HELL OFF

Little Johnny uses the word 'hell' much too often for his mother's liking. Dad sits next to Mom on the couch nonchalantly reading the paper. Mom tries to curb Johnny's mouthy enthusiasm but he just ignores her while he peddles his go-cart and picks up his imaginary friends at a make-believe bus stop in the family living room. He is not the friendliest of wagon masters but he's just a kid, right? Well, in the battle of wills, Mom's no match for this determined eight-year-old wannabe-bus-driver who doesn't take any crap from anyone.

SET DESIGN for GET THE HELL OFF

A living room with a couch, coffee table, and a swinging door (or an open door) that allows a twelve year old boy (or a man playing a 12-year old boy) peddle his go-cart on and off stage.

CHARATERS:

Johnny: a young boy

Bertha: Late 20's; Johnny's neurotic mother

Hamilton: Late 20's; Johnny's cool, albeit unconcerned, father.

GET THE HELL OFF - a Comedy

SETTING:

A LIVING ROOM with just a couch and a coffee table. A swinging door behind the couch leads to backstage.

A BOX OF TISSUES sits on top of coffee table.

AT RISE:

LIGHTS FADE IN on BERTHA and HAMILTON who are sitting on the couch in mid-conversation. Hamilton is reading the paper appearing more comfortable with silence. Bertha appears more excitable.

BERTHA

I don't like the way Johnny talks to his ... his ...

(Hamilton puts the paper on his lap.)

HAMILTON

His imaginary friends?

(It's hard for Bertha to admit it.)

BERTHA

Yes.

(Hamilton goes back to reading.)

HAMILTON

Every boy has imaginary friends.

BERTHA

That's not the point, Hamilton. He curses when he talks to them.

HAMILTON

Hmm.

BERTHA

He doesn't curse at anyone else. Just to them. It's terrible, the way he talks to his ... his ...

HAMILTON

... imaginary friends?

BERTHA

Yes. It's just terrible. I want you to talk to him.

HAMILTON

About what, Bertha?

BERTHA

About his language ... aren't you listening to me?

(Just as Bertha says this, JOHNNY, a young boy, perhaps as old as 8 or 9, bursts into the living room peddling his go-cart. As he rides around the couch--)

JOHNNY

Hi, pops.

(While Hamilton reads--)

HAMILTON

Hi, son. Watch you mouth.

JOHNNY

Okay, pops.

(Johnny peddles a little further then stops, as if he is a bus driver picking up passengers - i.e., his imaginary friends.)

JOHNNY

Okay, Knucklebrains. Those of you who want to get on, get the HELL on. Those of you who want to get off, get the HELL off.

(Bertha gasps while Hamilton just continues to read his paper as if nothing has happened.)

Johnny makes a turn and then disappears out of the room.)

BERTHA

Did you hear that? He said the 'H' word, Hamilton. HAMILTON?

(Hamilton puts the paper down.)

HAMILTON

What, Bertha. What. WHAT!

BERTHA

Did you hear him? He said ... 'hell'.

HAMILTON

I told him to watch his mouth. What more do you want me to do, beat him?

(Hamilton buries his head back in the paper.)

BERTHA

I want you to be serious with him. You're never serious with him. He said 'hell', Hamilton.

HAMILTON

(through the paper)

Shiver-me-timbers.

(Hamilton continues reading while Bertha sobs for a few beats.)

She grabs a couple of tissues from the tissue box on the coffee table and blows her nose loudly.

She calms herself, taking several deep breaths.)

BERTHA

We're raising a social menace. I know it. I just know it. Next ... he'll talk to us that way. Then his teachers. Then he'll go to school with a gun and--

(Johnny races back into the room with his go-cart. He peddles around the couch and stops at an imaginary bus stop and talks to no one we can see.)

JOHNNY

Okay, you Teletubbie rejects, those of you who want to get on, get the HELL on. Those of you who want to get off, get the HELL off.

(Bertha holds her chest as if someone just punched her. She jumps to her feet runs to Johnny and waves her finger at him.)

BERTHA

You listen here, young man. I don't like the way you're talking. You talk nice, do you hear me?

JOHNNY

Yes, Mommy.

BERTHA

Okay. Go. Play nice.

(While Johnny TOOTS his imaginary horn and exits, Bertha sits back down on the couch and bites her fingernails. Her neck tightens, spasmodic. She puts a finger on a pressure point close to her collarbone. The twitching stops.

Hamilton continues reading. He appears cool, calm, and collected.

After a beat, Johnny bursts through the doors again and races around the couch.

He catches a glimpse of his mother who is looking very cross at him. Johnny waves and smiles, and Mom softens and smiles back. Maybe she has been a little tough on him.

Johnny stops at his customer spot.)

JOHNNY

Okay, you needle-neck flunkies, those of you who want to get on, get the HELL on. Those of you who want to get off, get the HELL off.

(Bertha bolts to the imaginary bus stop and waves her finger in Johnny's face once again.)

BERTHA

That's it, young man. You go into your room right now. You're grounded. You're being punished, do you hear me? Now go.

(Johnny appears defeated, disappears through the doors.

Bertha sits down on the couch.)

BERTHA

Did you hear him, Hamilton?

HAMILTON

(while reading)

Hear what?

BERTHA

AREN'T YOU LISTENING? He said 'hell' again and ...

(Hamilton puts the paper down and folds his hands across the paper.)

HAMILTON

Confound it, Bertha! What's the big deal? He said it to his imaginary friends.

BERTHA

He said the 'f' word. He said ... 'flunkies'.

HAMILTON

For crying out loud ... 'flunkies' is not a bad word.

BERTHA

It's not? It sounds like one.

(Hamilton sighs - goes back to reading
and talks through the paper--)

HAMILTON

Anyway, they're imaginary flunkies. Big deal.

(Bertha can take very little more.)

An EASEL is lowered long enough for the
audience to read: "THREE HOURS LATER".
The easel is then pulled back up.

BERTHA

(looks at her watch and--)

Do you think Johnny has been punished enough?

(Hamilton appears to be reading the
paper and does not respond.)

BERTHA

Hamilton!

(The paper slides down. We see that
Hamilton is nodding off. Bertha lets
out with a gigantic sigh. She gets up
and walks to the door and disappears
from view. We can hear both Mom and
Johnny off-stage.)

BERTHA (O.S.)

Okay, young man. Have you learned your lesson?

JOHNNY (O.S.)
(very sincere)

Yes, Mommy.

BERTHA (O.S.)
Alrighty, then. You play nice now. Don't say any of those bad words. You hear me, young man?

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Yes, Mommy.

(Johnny bolts into the room pumping hard on his go-cart. Bertha is close behind and retreats to the couch.)

Johnny peddles the go-cart around the living room just like before. He stops and looks over to Bertha and smiles. She smiles back. He turns to his imaginary friends and--)

JOHNNY
Those of you blowhards who want to get on, GET THE HELL ON.
(faster)
Those of you who want get off, then get the HELL off. Those of you who didn't like the three-hour delay,
(points at Mom)
complain to the BITCH over there.

(Johnny peddles quickly and takes his imaginary friends out of the living room and off-stage. Bertha appears to have breathing problems. She feels her arms. Her face. She appears paralyzed. After a beat she turns to Hamilton who is sound asleep. She shakes him.)

BERTHA
Wake up ... wake up.

HAMILTON
What? WHAT!

BERTHA

Your son ... your son ...

(Johnny bursts through doors with his go-cart, but this time he peddles in with a baseball and two gloves in the back of the cart. He stops in front of Hamilton and tosses the baseball up and down.)

JOHNNY

Dad, you want to have a catch?

HAMILTON

Sure son. That would be nice.

(He gets up, helps Johnny off the go-cart. He takes the gloves and they bolt off-stage.)

Bertha's mouth hangs open while she stares straight ahead, as if drugged. She takes one solitary gulp of air, then breathes very slowly. A single twitch in her neck causes her head to jerk slightly. There it is again.

And one more time.)

(BLACKOUT)

CURTAIN FALLS