

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

Lessons From the
Golden Age of Television

A SERIES OF SKETCHES
FOR DINNER THEATER

BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN
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SUGGESTIONS FOR A DINNER THEATER

THEME: Big television screen surrounding stage. Set will be simple.
Food will be along the lines of :

Momma's Pot Roast
Sister's Au Gratin Potatoes
Aunty's Chocolate Cake

Waiters will be dressed in fifties style and will act ala Prime Time Café

A Narrator will tie all of the sketches together

Sketches:

"Lisa's Brownies"
In the spirit of Green Acres"

"The Goofy Samaritan"
In the spirit of I Love Lucy

"Dictation"
In the spirit of The Carol Burnett Show

"The Perfect Family"
The Twilight Zone

"The Bully"
In the spirit of The Andy Griffith Show

During dinner, we could project snippets of these shows on the big screen television.

LISA'S BROWNIES
INSPIRED BY GREEN ACRES
BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN

CAST:

OLIVER DOUGLAS
LISA DOUGLAS
ED
MR. KIMBELL
MR. HANEY

(Scene opens in Lisa's kitchen.)

OLIVER: Good morning, Lisa.

LISA: Hello, Darling.

OLIVER: (Frightened!) You aren't cooking, are you?

LISA: Yes. But you keeps your hands off of my brownies. They're not for you.

OLIVER: Thank goodness. Uh, who are you poisoning, I mean, cooking them for?

LISA: Well, the ladies at the church are having a Love Luncheon and I volunteered to make the desert.

OLIVER: Lisa, do you think that's a good idea? I mean, we only joined the church last month. We don't want to get kicked out this soon.

LISA: Oliver!

OLIVER: Lisa, the last brownies you cooked were hard enough to use as door stops.

LISA: That's because I forgot to put in the flour. But, this time, I'm using a new recipe. See?

OLIVER: From Better Homes and Garters?

LISA: It's put out by Fredericks of Hollywood. I picked it up last week when I went into New York City.

OLIVER: Why would a women's clothing store sell brownie recipes.

LISA: Because my Uncle Deuteronomy used to say, "Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but a man's way to a woman's heart is through chocolate."

OLIVER: If I'd known that, I would have bought you a bag of Hershey's kisses instead of an engagement ring.

LISA: You will change you mind once you see what else I bought with the cook book. I also picked up something just for you.

OLIVER: (Smiling.) Well, then go ahead and make the brownies. We'll see just how forgiving the church ladies can be.

(Mr. Kimbell enters.)

MR. KIMBELL: Good morning.

OLIVER: Ah, Mr. Kimble.

MR. KIMBELL: Well, it's actually not a good morning. But it is morning. At least it was morning when I left the house. But, I had that flat on the way and I had to change the tire so it could be afternoon. No. It can't be afternoon because I haven't had lunch yet. Hey, I smell brownies.

OLIVER: Lisa is cooking some for the church ladies' group.

MR. KIMBELL: Darn, I need a new door stop.

OLIVER: So, what can I do for you Mr. Kimble?

MR. KIMBELL: You wouldn't have a spare tire would you?

OLIVER: A spare tire? I thought you said you changed your tire?

MR. KIMBELL: I did. But the spare was flat, too.

OLIVER: How did you get here?

MR. KIMBELL: I drove my truck. And, now my tire is all shredded. Come to think of it, it's not shredded. It's not even there. Maybe I could put the flat tire back on and drive back into town. But, then it would be past noon and I would miss lunch.

LISA: You could eat lunch with us.

MR. KIMBELL: Uh, no thanks. Hey, maybe I could use your brownies to retread my tire.

LISA: Mr. Kimble!

MR. KIMBELL: I was only kidding. Well, I'll see you guys later.

OLIVER: Mr. Kimble, why did you really come by here?

MR. KIMBELL: Oh, to bring you this letter. It's from the county farm agent. They've condemned your crops this year. Said something about them being inedible.

OLIVER: What? There's nothing wrong with my maize.

MR. KIMBELL: Maize? You know you could get lost in your garden. Lost. Maize. Get it? Well, I have to be off. (He exits and Eb enters.)

EB: Holy cow, Mrs. Douglas. You're cooking brownies again.

LISA: I suppose you want to use them as doors stops.

EB: No. My friends and I use them over at the gun club. We use them for skeet's.

LISA: I didn't know you were into drama. I played in some skeets when I was back in Budapest. There was this one where I played the farmer's daughter who was in love with the local stock broker.

OLIVER: Stock broker? In Budapest?

LISA: Yes, he broke the stocks on the prisoners in the town square when they had paid their pennies for the crimes they had done. Sergei was such a handsome boy. He played the stock broker but on the night of the last performance, when he brokes the stock, one fell on his head and killed him.

OLIVER: That's awful!

LISA: He lost his head when the stocks fell.

OLIVER: Uh, Lisa, Eb is talking about skeet's, not skits. They're thrown up in the air and you shoot them with a gun.

LISA: Well, he's not getting my brownies.
(Eb exits hurriedly as Mr. Haney walks in.)

MR. HANEY: Good morning, Mr. And Mrs. Douglas. It looks like I arrived just in time.

OLIVER: Oh, not now, Mr. Haney.

MR. HANEY: Did I hear someone say something about sheets? Why I have with me today a shipment of genuine Oriental silk sheets for just \$2.99 a sheet.

LISA: Silk sheets? Oh, Oliver, I love silk sheets.

OLIVER: \$2.99 a sheet? Lisa, he's pulling our leg. You can't buy good silk sheets for just \$2.99.

MR. HANEY: Mr. Douglas, I am hurt that you would doubt me. I have you know I secured these sheets from a fine Oriental man in San Francisco who assures me these sheets were slept on by the Emperor of China. Here is a sample.

LISA: Oh, Oliver, they're beautiful.

OLIVER: Well, I must say I am impressed.

MR. HANEY: Good, then if you will just sign right here, you can have two sets of sheets. That'll be \$149.99.

OLIVER: What? But you said the sheets were \$2.99 each.

MR. HANEY: They are but the set comes with a special cleaning kit to keep your sheets shiny.

OLIVER: Take you shiny sheets and get out of here.

MR. HANEY: I am wounded to the heart, Mr. Douglas. (He pulls him away.) You wouldn't be interested in four dozen brownies, now would you?

OLIVER: What?

MR. HANEY: I have four dozen brownies cooked in a New York deli out in my truck. I understand your wife is going to be cooking for the Love Luncheon and I know you wouldn't want to see any of those sweet women end up in the hospital.

OLIVER: Brownies?

MR. HANEY: Tell you what I'm going to do. I'll sell you the four dozen for just \$34.99.

OLIVER: I'll trade you Lisa's brownies and you can sell them to the gun club.

MR. HANEY: Hmmm. They do make good doorstops, you know. It's a deal.

(Goes over to plastic container of brownies that Lisa is finishing up.)

OLIVER: These look nice, Lisa.

LISA: I had an extra one left over. Would you like to try it?

OLIVER: (Hesitant.) Lisa, what if an extra person shows up at the luncheon?

LISA: Oh, please, Oliver. For once would you believe in me?

OLIVER: Lisa, I always believe in you. In everything but cooking.

LISA: Oh, you're just like one of those pharmacies.

OLIVER: Pharmacies?

LISA: That Jesus was talking about.

OLIVER: Oh, you mean Pharisees.

LISA: He called them vipers, and snakes, and hypocreeks.

OLIVER: Hypocrites.

LISA: That's right. They said one thing and believed another thing. If you love me and believe in me then why won't you eat one of these brownies? Do you know why? Because you are a hypocreek.

OLIVER: Lisa!

MR. HANEY: What do you want me to do with these, Mr. Douglas?

LISA: What is that?

MR. HANEY: Your brownies.

LISA: Oliver! You bought some brownies from Mr. Haney to replace my brownies? You are a bigger hypocreek than I thought.

OLIVER: OK, wait a minute. Lisa, you're right. I am being a hypocreek, I mean a hypocrite. If you believe in these brownies, then I will try one. (He takes it and eats it.) Hey, these are good! In fact, these are the best brownies I've ever eaten!

LISA: Oh, Oliver. See, I told you I could do it.

OLIVER: You were right, Lisa. I do love you and I do believe in you.

LISA: Just like Jesus believed in his disciples. If he hadn't believed in them they would have just caught more fish instead of men. Oh, Oliver, I love you.

OLIVER: Mr. Haney, would you take Mrs. Douglas' brownies out to my car and I'll pay you for all your trouble.

MR. HANEY: You'll pay me?

OLIVER: (Out of earshot.) And put your brownies in my car and take these far away. They're awful!

MR. HANEY: Mr. Douglas, (as he accepts money) it's always good to do business with you.

THE GOOFY SAMARITAN
BASED ON “I LOVE LUCY”

BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN

CAST:

LUCY
ETHEL
FRED
RICKY
A BUM

(Lucy, Ethel, Ricky, and Fred are walking down the sidewalk.)

LUCY: Ricky, thank you for taking us out to eat at Bongo's

ETHEL: Yeah, the food was great.

FRED: The price was even greater.

ETHEL: Fred, Ricky paid for our meal.

FRED: That's what made it so good.

ETHEL: Fred, if you were any tighter with your money, we would be able to hear George Washington squeal all the way across town.

FRED: I didn't hear you complaining when I gave you your allowance yesterday.

ETHEL: Oh, you mean when you gave me a quarter to call someone who cares? Why can't you be generous like the Roving Millionaire?

RICKY: Roving millionaire?

LUCY: Yeah, Ricky. This millionaire wanders around town and whenever he sees someone he thinks deserves some money, he walks up and gives it to them.

FRED: He's a lunatic, if you ask me.

ETHEL: Then you have at least one thing in common with him.

LUCY: That's enough Ethel. Fred is not the only one who is tight.

RICKY: What is that supposed to mean?

LUCY: Well, I've been trying to get you to go over there to that new music store and at least look at the drum set.

RICKY: Lucy, we've been over this before.

LUCY: Ah, Ricky, please. Little Ricky just has to get that new drum set for his birthday. His heart is set on it.

RICKY: Well, until business at the club picks up, I can't afford to buy Little Ricky a new set of drums.

LUCY: But, it's only \$50.

FRED: \$50! I'll sell you Ethel's set of pots and he can bang on them to his heart's delight. At least someone would get some use out of them.

ETHEL: What is that supposed to mean?

FRED: Pots won't do you any good unless you know how to cook.

RICKY: (Trying to ease the tension.) Uh, Fred, why don't we go down to the news stand and check out the sports magazines?

ETHEL: Yeah, see if you can get some tips on boxing. Because when we get home, I'm going to box your ears!

(Ricky and Fred leave.)

ETHEL: Sometimes, I wonder what I ever saw in that man. But, at the time I guess love was blind. Come to think of it, I'm glad love is still blind. Sometimes I just wish it were deaf, too.

LUCY: Oh, Ethel what am I going to do about those drums? I promised Little Ricky he would have them for his birthday.

ETHEL: Well, unless you've got a money tree growing in the back yard, you're going to have to break his heart.

LUCY: I wish we could find that roving millionaire. But, since he's not even from around here, my chances are pretty slim. (She digs in her purse and pulls out a \$50 bill.) I guess I'm going to have to use this.

ETHEL: Lucy, where did you get \$50?

LUCY: Let's just say the good Lord sent it to me.

ETHEL: Oh, you just prayed and it appeared, 'poof' in your purse?

LUCY: Well, sort of.

ETHEL: Lucy! Where did you get the money?

LUCY: Yesterday in church, remember, Pastor Sutton was preaching on 'ask and ye shall receive'. So, I bowed my head and I asked God for \$50. And, when I opened my eyes, there it was right in front of me.

ETHEL: No!

LUCY: Yes! So, I took it out of the offering plate and . . .

ETHEL: You did what? Lucy, you took \$50 out of the offering plate.

LUCY: Well, it was passing by at just the right time . . .

ETHEL: Lucy, you were at church, not at an all you can eat buffet. You've got to give that money back.

LUCY: I plan to, Ethel. As soon as I get the drum set. Once Ricky sees our son playing those drums, he'll give me the \$50 to give back to the church.

(During this time, a bum has wandered down the sidewalk and comes up to Lucy.)

BUM: Excuse me, Madame, but could you possibly spare a few coins for a bite to eat?

LUCY: (Waving away the smell and reacting the man leaning against her.) Uh, no sir. You need to go down to the Salvation Army or something.

BUM: But, I just talked to the Lord and He said, (in a deep voice as if he is inebriated) Johnny, my boy, ask and ye shall receive. Some good Samaritan is going to help you out today.

LUCY: Well, I'm not a Samaritan. I'm Baptist.

ETHEL: (Motioning to Lucy and pulling her away from the bum.) Lucy, this is your chance to make up for taking that money. Give it to him.

LUCY: What? Give him the money? Are you crazy?

ETHEL: Lucy, it's the right thing to do.

LUCY: (Jerks money away from Ethel as they fight over it and holds it away from Ethel toward the bum.) Give him the money? (She shouts.)

BUM: (Taking the money out of her hand before she can react.) Why thank you, my good lady. If you're going to give me the money, I'll take it. After all, my children are starving and my poor wife can buy a lot of groceries with this. We have nine mouths to feed.

LUCY: (Looking stricken.) Nine mouths?

BUM: Yeah. And, the youngest is only three months. He hasn't had milk in a week.

LUCY: (Resigning herself to her fate.) Well, I hope they enjoy it.

BUM: (Walks on and sits on a nearby park bench. During the following conversation, falls asleep sitting up.)

ETHEL: Lucy, that was the kindest thing you've ever done.

LUCY: What? If I hadn't have been fighting with you, he'd have never gotten that money. Ethel, what am I going to do? I can't let him take that money.

ETHEL: But what about the nine mouths?

LUCY: Oh, I don't know. If Ricky finds out I took \$50 to buy a set of drums and then gave it away to a bum, he'll never speak to me again. I've got to get that money back.

ETHEL: And just how do you propose to do that?

LUCY: Well, look, he's fallen asleep on that bench. You sit on one side of him and distract him if he wakes up and I'll sit on the other side and try to get the money away from him.

(They walk over. This scene is played up for all its worth. During this scene, Lucy motions for Ethel to tickle the man's nose so he will uncross his arms. When she does, he slaps at his nose and hits Lucy. Then, when Lucy finally gets ahold of the money, the man puts his arm around her and starts talking.)

BUM: Hey, honey. How's my little poochy woochy? Have you put all the children to bed, yet? How about giving me a little kissie poo? Huh?

LUCY: Uh, pumpkin face, I hear the youngest crying. Why don't you give me that money so I can go buy some milk?

BUM: Ah, just a little kissie wissie first? Please?

(Ethel motions and Lucy grimaces. She leans forward to kiss him on the cheek and he opens his eyes and yells 'Boo'. Lucy falls off bench and the man starts laughing. He changes his entire character. His voice becomes clear. He is the roving millionaire.)

BUM: Now, my good lady, just why are you trying to get this money back?

LUCY: Well, I know you've got nine mouths to feed, (starts her classic crying routine) but I promised my son I would buy him a new drum set for his birthday and I need that money to make his birthday wish come true.

ETHEL: Tell him the rest, Lucy.

BUM: Yes, tell me the rest.

LUCY: Well, I really need the money so I can give it back to the church. It belongs to the church and I can't really use it to buy a set of drums. You see, I prayed the Lord would give me the money and I got a little greedy and jumped the gun. I thought I could help Him answer my prayer. But, all I did was get into a whole lot of trouble.

BUM: At least your intentions were good. But, good intentions aren't good enough. I tell you what I'll do. I'll give you \$50 back on one condition.

LUCY: What?

BUM: You have to give it back to the church.

LUCY: Oh, I will, mister. I've learned my lesson.

ETHEL: That'll be the day.

BUM: And, if you give the money back to the church, (he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a \$100 bill.) this \$100 bill can be yours.

LUCY: What?

BUM: You see, I'm the roving millionaire. And, even though you were a bit, ah, creative in solving your problem, your motives were good. I hope your son enjoys his drums.

LUCY: Oh, thank you.

BUM: Don't thank me. Thank the Lord.

(Begins to walk away and Lucy stops him.)

LUCY: Do you really have nine mouths to feed?

BUM: No, I have thousands of mouths to feed. God has given much to me and to whom much is given much is required. So, I give back to those around me what the Lord has given me. Remember that the next time you get selfish.

LUCY: I will.

DICTATION
INSPIRED BY THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW

BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN

CAST:
MR. TUDBALL
MRS. WIGGINS

(Mr. Tudball goes over to Mrs. Wiggins.)

MR. TUDBALL: Good morning, Mrs. Wiggins.

MRS. WIGGINS: Hello.

MR. TUDBALL: Uh, we need to get in touch with this situation real fast, there. As you know, I am the new administrator for Brookwood Baptist Church.

MRS. WIGGINS: Uh, huh. (Polishing nails.)

MR. TUDBALL: And, I need you to come and take some dictation.

MRS. WIGGINS: OK. (Continues to polish her nails.)

MR. TUDBALL: If you're not too busy saving the world, right now would be a good time.

MRS. WIGGINS: (He goes to his desk and she comes in and sits by his desk. Does not write down as he talks, but stares off into space while chewing gum.)

MR. TUDBALL: Well, let's get started right now. Dear Mr. Smith. As you know, you have been elected as the new chairman of the deacons, and . . . Mrs. Wiggins, you're not writing down what I 'm saying.

MRS. WIGGINS: I know.

MR. TUDBALL: Well, did you just get a terrible case of writer's block or something?

MRS. WIGGINS: No. My pencil needs to be sharpened.

MR. TUDBALL: I'll say it does. Well, go in there and be sharpening the pencil already.

MRS. WIGGINS: (Gets up and goes into her office and sharpens pencil. Takes forever. Does the bottom shimmy while she sharpens.)

MR. TUDBALL: What is taking her so long, there? By golly, I think she's one blade short of a ceiling fan. (Presses intercom.) Uh, Mrs. Wiggins?

MRS. WIGGINS: (Notices the intercom and goes and sits at her desk. Each time Tudball presses the intercom, she cuts him off.)

MR. TUDBALL: Uh, Mrs. Wiggins . . .

MRS. WIGGINS: Hello.

MR. TUDBALL: Uh, Mrs. Wiggins, don't be pushing the button while I'm trying to talk . . .

MRS. WIGGINS: Hello.

MR. TUDBALL: (Faster.) Uh, Mrs. Wiggins, don't be pushing the button. . .

MRS. WIGGINS: Hello.

MR. TUDBALL: By golly, this is a like a working at the Loony Toons. (Gets up and crosses to her desk.) Mrs. Wiggins, I'm trying to talk to you on that there intercom and you are a pushing the button while I'm talking there.

MRS. WIGGINS: Yeah.

MR. TUDBALL: Mrs. Wiggins, sometimes I think you were behind the door when God passed out the brains. Now, would you come and take my dictation?

MRS. WIGGINS: (Picks up purse and coat as Mr. Tudball goes back to desk. She walks past him.)

MR. TUDBALL: Now, Dear Mr. Smith, since you are the new chairman of deacons . . . Uh, Mrs. Wiggins where are you going?

MRS. WIGGINS: To lunch.

MR. TUDBALL: But, we haven't finished the letter. All you've done is sharpen some pencils.

MRS. WIGGINS: Yeah. And, it made me hungry.

MR. TUDBALL: But, what about my letter?

MRS. WIGGINS: (Goes over and hands him her pencil.) It's sharpened for you.

MR. TUDBALL: (Stands up angrily.) Now wait just a gosh darn minute there. I am the boss and you are the secretary. When I say it's a time to take dictation, you take dictation. It's not time for lunch, already. So sit down and take my dictation.

MRS. WIGGINS: (Shrugs and sits.) You shouldn't get so angry. It makes your eyeballs pop out.

MR. TUDBALL: Well, as mad as I am, I'm surprised my eyeballs aren't popping like Orville Redenbaucker's.

MRS. WIGGINS: You know, you should be kind to me. The Bible tells you to.

MR. TUDBALL: I would agree with you there, now Mrs. Wiggins. The Bible says to be kind to fools.

MRS. WIGGINS: That's why I don't get mad at you.

MR. TUDBALL: What? Now listen here Mrs. Wiggins, you may think you are God's gift to the business world, but the truth is you've been driving with the parking brake on.

MRS. WIGGINS: (Just looks at him.)

MR. TUDBALL: You know, one brick shy of a load. The lights are on but no one's home. (Ad lib some more.)

MRS. WIGGINS: Be ye kind one to another. That's what the Bible says. You're not very kind, Mr. Tudball.

MR. TUDBALL: Are you going to take dictation or what?

MRS. WIGGINS: No, I quit.

MR. TUDBALL: You can't quit. I haven't fired you yet.

MRS. WIGGINS: Oh, I forgot.

MR. TUDBALL: Mrs. Wiggins, you're fired!

MRS. WIGGINS: OK. Can I go to lunch now?

MR. TUDBALL: Only if you come back after lunch and do this dictation.

MRS. WIGGINS: OK. I'll see you later.

**THE TWILIGHT ZONE:
THE PERFECT FAMILY**

**ADAPTED FOR DINNER THEATER
APRIL, 2002**

**BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN**

CAST:
STRANGER ALA ROD SERLING
CHARLES
LINDA, HIS WIFE
HEATHER, HIS DAUGHTER AGE 8
PETER, HIS SON AGE 11
PAM, TEENAGE DAUGHTER

(Charles and a stranger dressed in a dark suit are seated by each other on a bus.)

STRANGER: Rough day?

CHARLES: What? Oh no. The day was fine. It's the nights I dread.

STRANGER: You live alone. I get it.

CHARLES: No. I only wished I lived alone. I have a family.

STRANGER: Sounds like you don't enjoy being with your family.

CHARLES: I love my family. It's just sometimes I don't like them. My daughter is fifteen and in love with boys. And every boy seems to be a surf ninja zombie whose only ambition is to sing in a heavy metal band. My son is nine years old and has an umbilical cord

attached to his Xbox. Or, is it the Gamecube? I can't keep them straight. My young daughter thinks Eve's real name was Barbie and wants a pink Barbie Cadillac no matter what the cost. I just thought I was leaving the stress behind at the office.

STRANGER: You don't think you're family is perfect?

CHARLES: Well, it's not that. It's just that I'm tired. Very, very tired. And I know when I get home, it'll just be more stress and a different kind of work. By the time morning arrives, I'll be glad to get back to the grueling grindstone of my job. It wouldn't be so bad if I had a perfect family. You know, like in those old TV shows. Submissive wife, obedient children who respect their father no matter what. Just once, I would like to feel like I was in total control of my family.

Well, here's my stop. See you later.

(Charles gets off bus and walks up to house. Stranger crosses to opposite stage and stands on corner of stage assuming an appearance like Rod Serling. In the background, the song from the Twilight Zone is heard.)

STRANGER: Charles Johnson, average harried businessman with a problem. It seems his scriptural expectations of his family are too uncompromising. His only desire is a perfect family. Well, tonight, Charles will get his wish as he steps over that nebulous boundary into the Twilight Zone.

(Charles pauses at the door and draws a deep breath as if steeling himself for an onslaught. He opens the door.)

CHARLES: Linda, I'm here.

LINDA: *(Rushes out in an apron and hair in perfect shape. She is wearing a dress.)* Charles, darling, you made it. Oh how wonderful it is to see you.

(Children rush out, all dressed in dresses and suits, hair perfectly combed.)

HEATHER: Oh, father. How good to see you.

PETER: Yes. I have been waiting to read a book with you.

CHARLES: What is going on here? A book? What about your Xbox?

PETER: Oh, father. Those video games are a mindless, electronic parasite that leeches away my incentive. I think that reading is a much better pursuit.

CHARLES: *(Reaches over and touches his son.)* Do you feel well?

LINDA: Oh, they're just fine. And I feel wonderful. Come to the table. Dinner is waiting.

CHARLES: Dinner? You mean you cooked? You never cook.

LINDA: How silly, dear. Of course I cook. I cook for you every meal.
(Charles notices the stranger and goes up to him.)

CHARLES: I know you. You were on the bus. What is going on here?

STRANGER: You said you wanted the perfect family. Notice how the wife is submissive to the husband. The children obedient and well groomed. Enjoy the rest of your life.

CHARLES: *(Hurries to table. Notices Pam is dressed in a dress.)* Pam?

PAM: *(Kisses her father on the cheek.)* Hello, father. How good it is to see you. Would you like for me to serve you?

CHARLES: *(Peter pushes the chair up under his father who sits suddenly.)*
Since when do you wait on me?

PAM: Why, always, father. "Honor your father and mother."

HEATHER: We've been reading the Bible, father.

LINDA: Yes, and after dinner we are having a Bible study, just like we do every night.

CHARLES: Every night? I'm lucky to get you to read the Bible with me once a week.

PAM: Here's your plate, father.

CHARLES: You fixed my plate? Last time your mother cooked she told me to wait on myself. And then, I cleaned up the table.

LINDA: Don't be silly. That's women's work.

CHARLES: *(To audience)* Don't let Hillary Clinton hear you say that.

PETER: I'll help with the dishes, right after I take the trash out.

CHARLES: I don't believe what I'm hearing. You actually WANT to take the trash out?

PETER: Why, of course. It's one of my chores. How else can I earn my allowance?

CHARLES: Can we get this on video? Maybe the bus crashed and I'm in heaven.

HEATHER: Dear brother, could you pass me the butter?

PETER: Why, of course, my wonderful sister.

CHARLES: Wait a minute. You've never called you sister wonderful. The best thing you've called her is a bloated sack of nerd hair.

PETER: Father, you taught us to "Not provoke each other to wrath." Remember. Heather and I never fight. We love each other.

CHARLES: I'm feeling sick.

LINDA: Why don't you go sit in your comfortable chair. *(She helps him up and guides him over to chair. He sits and the children converge on him.)*

PETER: Father, here are your slippers. *(He puts them on his father's feet.)*

HEATHER: And, here is the evening paper.

PAM: Decaffeinated coffee just like you like it.

LINDA: And, now, we are going to go into the bedrooms and leave you alone for a while so you can unwind.

CHARLES: What? You're not going to watch television or play video games?

LINDA: Heavens no. You are the king of this castle, dear. We must respect you.

CHARLES: This isn't what I had in mind.

- PAM:** Father, why are you acting so strange?
- CHARLES:** Me? Acting strange? You are the ones acting strangely. Not me. Heather, here, usually talks only about Barbie. Peter lives in the world of Gamecube. Pam talks constantly about boys. And, your mother hasn't worn a dress to the dinner table since the first week of our marriage.
- PAM:** Oh, father, I've been meaning to tell you that I have decided not to date until I turn twenty one.
- CHARLES:** That's it. I've got to find somebody. *(He hurries across the stage to the stranger.)* Look, I don't know how you did this, but it's weird.
- STRANGER:** You wanted the perfect family.
- CHARLES:** Well, they're a little too perfect. Submissive wife, obedient children, powerful father figure. I feel like I'm back in the time of Abraham. Maybe my idea of a perfect family is wrong. My perfect family is the one I've raised, the one I live with.
- STRANGER:** Perhaps your perception of what a family should be is a little too strict. The scriptures can be interpreted far too harshly. God does not expect perfection. Just faith. Remember, humans are not perfect, just forgiven.
- CHARLES:** Right. Give me my family back. The way they were.
- STRANGER:** Are you sure?
- CHARLES:** Yes. Much more of this and I'll die of sugar diabetes.
- (He returns to his chair and the family suddenly reverts.)*
- LINDA:** What am I doing in this dress?
- PAM:** Me, too. Yuck, coffee? I hate coffee. *(She sets it down on the coffee table.)*
- PETER:** Why do I have a suit on? And where's my Gamecube?
- HEATHER:** Dad, when are you going to get me that Barbie biking outfit?
- CHARLES:** *(Smiles as he relaxes into chair.)* This is more like it. Believe it or

not, you just became the perfect family for a short while.

LINDA: Yes, it's coming back to me. I can't believe I cooked that seven course dinner.

PAM: Well, I'm going to get my jeans back on.

CHARLES: Wait. Peter said he was going to take out the trash, and Heather said she would stop fighting, and Pam said she wouldn't date until she was 21. There was nothing wrong with those parts of the perfect family. Why don't you stick to your promises?

Pam, Peter, and Heather look at each other and then at Linda.

LINDA: Well, maybe we could become the perfect family.

ALL: *(Pause for a beat as Charles smiles.)* NOT!!!

THE BULLY
INSPIRED BY THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW
BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN

CAST:

OPIE
ANDY TAYLOR
BARNEY

(Opie enters the sheriff's office.)

OPIE: Hi, pa.

ANDY: Oh, hi Opie. What you doing?

OPIE: Pa, I got a problem.

ANDY: Well, let's hear it.

OPIE: There's this kid named Billy at school. And, everyday he waits for me when I walk to school. He says he's going to beat me up if I don't give him my lunch money.

BARNEY: (Interrupting.) What? Well, that is what you call your typical bully, Opie.

OPIE: A bully?

BARNEY: Yep. Now, what you have to do is to show this ruffian who is the boss.

OPIE: Pa, what's a ruffian?

ANDY: (Trying to rile Barney.) It's a kind of dog.

OPIE: He ain't no dog, Pa. He's a boy.

BARNEY: Andge, you're not helping here. I'm trying to teach the boy how to handle your basic juvenile delinquent.

ANDY: Barney, he's not a juvenile delinquent. He's just a kid.

BARNEY: You sound just like those bleeding heart child puh-sychologists. A kid has some serious puh-sychological problems and you go into a classic state of denial.

OPIE: The Nile? You mean like the river?

BARNEY: Denial! If you want that kid to grow up and be a respectable citizen and not a criminal you got to nip this in the bud. Nip it, nip it, nip it.

OPIE: What am I nipping, Barney?

BARNEY: His criminal tendencies.

OPIE: Gosh, I didn't know he had any. All he wears is a tee shirt and jeans.

ANDY: What Barney is trying to say is you've got to understand what makes Billy act like this. Maybe he comes from a troubled family. Maybe he just needs a friend.

BARNEY: There you go, teaching the boy that claptrap. Sounds to me what this kid needs is a good whipping.

ANDY: Barney, remember what the Good Book says. "Love your neighbor as yourself."

BARNEY: Yeah, well it also says "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

OPIE: Billy ain't got his front teeth, Barney. I guess I'll have to go for his eyes, huh Pa?

BARNEY: Opie, all you got to do is stand up to this kid. Let him know who's boss. When he threatens you, just put a few Karatejitsu moves on him. (does some moves.) Yep, I can show you a few moves.

ANDY: I didn't know you knew Karatejitsu!

BARNEY: Yep, my whole body is one lethal weapon, Andge. Got me a black belt. I don't flaunt it much. Might scare the children.

OPIE: Can you show me something, Barney?

BARNEY: Well, sure. Now turn around. If the kid comes up behind you and grabs you on the shoulder, you just grab his hand and flip him.

OPIE: Flip him?

BARNEY: Yeah, use his body weight against him.

OPIE: You mean, like this? (He grabs Barney's hand and flips him.)

ANDY: Why, Opie, I think you're catching on. I think we might need to go down to Carson's Department store and get you one of them black belts.

BARNEY: (Addled and wobbly.) Did someone see my mother? Juanita, bring me some more grapes. (He passes out on the floor.)

OPIE: Pa, I don't think I want to try one of Barney's flips.

ANDY: Opie, you don't need to. If you answer violence with violence, both of you are going to get hurt. Now, here's what you do. You tell this kid that your dad is the sheriff and what he is doing is illegal. Then, ask him why he's taking your money. When he can't answer you, then you give him this. (He hands Opie some change.) Tell him that this is a gift from your Pa. Then tell him I'll be by later to talk to his parents.

OPIE: Gee, Pa. That's a good idea.

ANDY: You see, Opie, the Bible tells us to love our enemy. But, we still have to defend ourselves. But, part of loving our enemy is understanding what's going on inside of him that makes him that way. This boy doesn't seem to be very happy. Maybe he needs a good friend to help him get through the tough times that are causing him to be like this.

OPIE: Gee, Pa. It's hard to be a friend to somebody like that.

ANDY: You're right Opie. Liking the likeable is easy. Loving the unlovable is hard. But, that's what Jesus taught us to do when He died for us. We didn't deserve that kind of love from Him but He gave it to us anyway.

OPIE: Thanks, Pa. I can always count on you to help me out. Can I go play now?

ANDY: Sure.

OPIE: I'm going to go ask Billy if he wants to play ball with us.