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Dramatic Publishing

THE DALY NEWS

**Book and Lyrics by
JONATHAN GILLARD DALY**

**Music Composed by
LARRY DELINGER and GREGG COFFIN**

**Musical Arrangements by
GREGG COFFIN**



Dramatic Publishing

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(THE DALY NEWS)

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To Gale, Sam, and Emily

ACT ONE

SCENE: *In the darkness of the stage, a voice is heard singing.*

(MUSIC #1: "TIMEPIECE")

A VOICE.

**THIS IS MY TIMEPIECE
MEASURING THE PAST
FUTURES ARE GONE NOW
PRESENT DAYS WON'T LAST**

(A lone piano begins to accompany the voice, as lights slowly rise to reveal JON. He continues to sing, as a chorus of voices can be heard accompanying the melody.)

JON.

**HEED VOICES CALLING
AND YOU WILL UNDERSTAND
THIS IS MY TIMEPIECE
HOLD IT IN YOUR HAND.**

(JON, now revealed in spotlight, speaks directly to the audience. Piano continues underneath.)

When I was a kid, THE DALY NEWS was little more to me than a pile of papers gathering dust on a bookshelf in our living room. Martin Daly was the grandfather I never knew, and family history was the province of ancient uncles and aunts, who seemed to spend all their time together

looking back, never forward. But then my father died. I was twenty-five years old, and painfully aware that, even though we lived under the same roof for twenty-one of those years, we didn't really know each other very well. So when I asked my mom to give me something of Dad's as a keepsake, she went to the bookshelf, and gave me their copy of THE DALY NEWS.

(Lights reveal MARION, Jon's mother, about 21, dressed in 1940s era clothing. She is holding three large bound volumes of paper. As she sings, she slowly moves toward JON, and gently places the volumes in his hands.)

MARION.

**THIS WAS HIS TIMEPIECE
SOOTHING PAIN AND FEARS
SILENTLY SHEDDING SECRET MIDNIGHT TEARS
HOLDING TOGETHER A FAMILY KEPT APART
THIS WAS HIS TIMEPIECE
TAKE IT TO YOUR HEART.**

(Lights fade on MARION, as JON continues to speak to the audience. Piano plays underneath.)

JON. My favorite picture of my grandfather is a home movie from my imagination. It's a beautiful October afternoon in Milwaukee, my home town. I'm in the rumble seat of Martin's 1938 Buick. He's taking me for a Sunday drive, with my grandmother seated beside him. I can smell the apples and burning leaves in the crisp autumn air; I can hear the crunching sound as we drive over fallen acorn shells; I can feel the sun wrapping around me like an old sweater; and I can see Martin's smiling eyes, reflected in the rear-view mirror. And I want it all to last forever.

(Lights come up on EIGHT ACTORS: three young men, dressed in military uniforms from the World War II era, three young women [the young men's wives including MARION]; a fourth young man, a bit younger than the rest, dressed in civilian clothes from the same era; and SCHATZIE, the matriarch of the family. They sing with JON.)

COMPANY.

**THIS WAS HIS TIMEPIECE
A STORY TO TELL
OF LOVE FROM A DISTANCE
YOU MAY KNOW IT WELL
A DIARY OF FRAILTY
AND STRENGTH THAT SAW THEM THROUGH
THIS WAS HIS TIMEPIECE....**

JON.

MINE TO GIVE TO YOU.

(Music transition. The opening bars of "The Daly News" underscore the following speech, as the actors move chairs, arrange minimal props, and take positions for the next song.)

JON. Every Tuesday night, from 1943 to 1946, Martin Daly sat in front of an old typewriter, with all the letters he received every week from his kids, who were scattered over the globe, like so many families were during the Second World War. And he brought together all these lonely voices, and condensed their letters into a weekly account of the lives of the Daly family. He sent the finished product off to his kids every Wednesday morning without fail. He

even printed up special stationery, with the familiar mast-head blazing across the top of each page in big bold letters: THE DALY NEWS.

(MUSIC #2: "THE DALY NEWS")

COMPANY (*singing*).

HERE'S A VIEW OF WORLD WAR TWO
THROUGH ANXIOUS EYES
RAILROAD STATIONS SET THE SCENE FOR SAD
GOODBYES
DADDIES LEAVIN' CHILDREN, HUSBANDS
LEAVIN' WIVES
SEPARATION, DEPRIVATION, RATIONED LIVES
MARTIN' S GENERATION STAYED BEHIND TO
TELL THE STORY,
THE DALY NEWS.

(*The SINGERS each become specific characters by introducing themselves in the course of the next verse of the song.*)

BOB.

BOB'S A STRANDED NAVIGATOR, STUCK
STATE-SIDE
LEFT BEHIND HIS BABY GIRL—

MARION.

—AND LONELY BRIDE...

GENE.

GENE'S IN THE PACIFIC,
YOU'D A THOUGHT HE'D DIED

CHUCK.

CHUCK'S A NEWLYWED—

JANE.

THEIR HONEYMOON DENIED—

COMPANY.

**MARION AND JANE AND RUTH AND DAVE
HOLD DOWN THE HOME FRONT,
THE DALY NEWS.**

(JON approaches MARTIN's desk, which is a grand old oak monstrosity, fairly overflowing with papers. On the desk sits an old typewriter. Slung across the chair is a baggy old sweater, which JON picks up. He continues to speak to the audience. The piano is vamping "THE DALY NEWS.")

JON. This is how I imagine Martin fighting the War at Home: bourbon in hand, typewriter at the ready. THE DALY NEWS brings my grandfather to life for me, as he draws me closer to the father that I long to reach...*(Sings.)*

**MARTIN, TELL ME, MARTIN, OH THOSE
THINGS YOU DO
HOW'D YOU FIND THE MAN INSIDE TO SEE
YOU THROUGH
DAILY CORRESPONDENCE FROM AN ACHIN'
HEART
NO MATTER HOW IT GOT, YOU NEVER FELL
APART
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET ALONG, YOU
REALLY MEAN IT,
THE DALY NEWS.**

(JON puts on the sweater and a pair of wire-rimmed spectacles. With this activity, JON transforms to MARTIN. He shuffles papers, pours himself a drink. The music continues, as his CHILDREN call out various greetings to him.)

GENE. Hey, Dad, send some snow out this way, what do ya say?

BOB. What I wouldn't give for a home-cooked meal!

CHUCK. You haven't given my room to Dave, have ya?

DAVE. Don't worry, I dust your trophies every day!

MARTIN *(singing)*.

**KEEP THE PRESSES ROLLING, GOTTA DO MY PART
TALES OF HUMAN INTEREST COMIN' FROM
THE HEART
KEEP THE MESSAGE LIGHT AND HOLD THE
BLUES AT BAY
LET YOU KNOW I'M THINKING OF YOU EVERY
DAY**

MARTIN & CHORUS.

**IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET ALONG,
YOU REALLY MEAN IT,
THE DALY NEWS...
THE DALY NEWS...
THE DALY NEWS**

(Musical transition. Piano vamps opening strains of the next number. SCHATZIE rises and calls out from the direction of the "basement." MARTIN is at the typewriter, busily working.)

SCHATZIE. Martin!!! Are you hiding down in that basement again? Typing away at this hour! Martin, didn't I ask you

to pick up some butter on the way home? Ohhh, this rationing will be the very end of me! So what if I used up all my points this month? I can't make a krantz for Bob's birthday without butter! I told that Irv Saffert to stoop some back of the counter for me, but I suppose he owed someone else a favor. Well, let me tell you something! I've a good mind to march on down to his store and *demand* butter! (*Cue music.*) We've been doing business with him since Bob was a baby, and you mean to tell me we can't get a little extra *butter*?

(MUSIC #3: "PUBLISHED OCCASIONALLY")

MARTIN (*typing away, begins to sing*).

**PUBLISHED OCCASIONALLY AT THE OLD MANSE
5717 WEST WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
IN THE INTEREST OF THE FAR-FLUNG
MEMBERS OF THE CLAN
CARRYING NEWS, VIEWS AND INFORMATION
OF LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL
IMPORTANCE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF IS YOUR PA
ASSISTANT AND CHIEF CENSOR'S YOUR MA
WE'RE NOT AFFILIATED,
OR ELSE SUBSTANTIATED
BY ANY NEWS SERVICE, HIGH OR LOWLY RATED
ANY PUBLICATION OF REPUTE
WOULD SURELY GIVE YOUR EDITOR THE BOOT!
APOLOGIES ARE DONE
STAND BY FOR VOLUME ONE
LET'S GO TO PRESS**

SCHATZIE (*spoken, calling*).
LET'S GET SOME REST

MARTIN (*singing*).
LET'S GO...TO...
(*Makes a "typo." Spoken.*)
OH, HELL!!

MARTIN & CHORUS (*singing*).
THE DALY NEWS!!

MARTIN. March 5, 1943: First Edition.

LOCAL AND DOMESTIC. Well, there ain't much news on the old Home Front. Everyone we can send to war has gone to war, and everyone we can marry off during the current season has been married off. (*MARTIN nods to CHUCK.*) The only thing we can do now is pass along the news of one absent brethren to another. In other words, to act as a sort of clearing house.

Tonight's top story comes to us courtesy of the Eldest Son and Heir to All Our Debts. Lieutenant Robert C. Daly, Barracks 2, Class D, University of Denver, Front and Center!

(*BOB steps forward and speaks directly to MARTIN. In this scene, the convention must clearly be established in the staging that the characters speak directly to each other, establishing eye contact whenever it's helpful, even though they may be separated by thousands of miles.*)

BOB (*to MARTIN*). Sir!

MARTIN. Bob reports from navigators' school that he is gettin' a lot of book learnin' which he has already had, and

is being subjected to a lot of exercise which he has never had before—

BOB (*imitating his drill instructor*). You will run around this track at high speed; while doing so, you will kick the right foot forward to meet the right hand and then the left foot against the left hand. You will maintain your balance while flitting around the field like some damned Greek goddess. Begin!

MARTIN. What a fine spectacle you must make, my boy. Tell 'em about your grades, Bob! (*Ad lib responses from the BROTHERS. They clearly relish poking good-natured fun at their big brother. Improvised banter should be encouraged throughout this and any other scenes involving the BROTHERS.*)

BOB. History 99, Mathematics 95, Physics 93, First Aid 95, Air Regulations 100. Physical Education—none of anybody's business!

MARTIN. AND, he's too humble to say this, but Bob's squadron received the Standard for Best Outfit from the Governor of Colorado!

BOB. Come on, Dad...

MARTIN. I remember, Bob, when your squad at Boy Scout camp took first place in camp neatness, after you had practically scrubbed the sand in front of the cabin entrance! (*BOB begins to respond, but CHUCK beats him to the punch, and the two of them end up replying simultaneously.*)

BOB & CHUCK. *Somebody* had to do it...

MARTIN. You always had a special talent for falling down a sewer and coming up clean. Why, even when you were a baby, you'd refuse to eat unless Schatzie wiped your face and hands between every bite.

CHUCK. He *still* eats that way!

BOB. Very funny!

MARTIN. By the way, Bob, Mother's sending you a krantz in the mail. No matter what kind of shape it arrives in, make sure you make a big fuss about it, won't you?

BOB. I promise, Dad.

MARTIN. So this morning we woke up to the phone ringing, and there was Bob, calling all the way from Denver to wish his little girl a happy birthday.

BOB. Anne...? It's your Daddy...Daddy...hello?

MARTIN. We tried everything to get Anne to say something to her daddy. We're all clucking and cooing, and just about standing on our heads, and all you can hear is Bob's voice, loud and clear—

ANNE. Anne? Are you there? Anne...?

MARTIN. Finally, after almost ten minutes of this, she just walked away, leaving the phone dangling off the hook.

BOB. Anne?...Anne?

MARION (*rises, to BOB*). Bob?

BOB. Hello?

MARION. It's Marion, honey—

BOB. Hi. I guess she's a little tongue-tied.

MARION. I love you, Bob.

BOB. I love you, too. Bye...

MARION. ...Bye...(*Music cue Intro.*)

MARTIN. How I wish you could hear that little dickens jabber away, Bob. All day long. She even calls me "daddee"! (*Lights fade down on MARTIN.*)

(MUSIC #4A: "IN THE DISTANCE"—D)

BOB (*singing*).

ANNE...

I'M IN THE ARMY NOW, I'M LIVING FAR AWAY

I WISH THAT YOU COULD TALK TO ME, I WISH
YOU'D SAY
THAT YOU REMEMBER ME.
I WISH THAT WHAT I SAY TO YOU COULD
MAKE YOU SMILE
I WISH YOU KNEW I'LL BE HOME IN A LITTLE
WHILE
PLEASE WAIT FOR ME.
BUT WORDS ARE ONLY SOUNDS TO YOU,
THE MEANING SIMPLY CAN'T COME THROUGH,
AND IN THE DISTANCE I CAN FEEL YOU DRIFT
AWAY

ANNE...

I CALL YOUR NAME, I BABBLE WORDS INTO
THE PHONE
THE TRUTH IS, THAT I CAN'T EXPLAIN WHY
I'M NOT HOME,
BUT STILL I TRY.
THE SUDDEN SILENCE SAYS I'M OUT OF
THINGS TO SAY
YOU'VE GIVEN UP,
I HEAR YOU AS YOU WALK AWAY,
I SAY GOODBYE.
SO MUCH OF YOU I'LL NEVER SEE,
YOUR CHILDHOOD IS LOST TO ME,
AND IN THE DISTANCE I CAN FEEL YOU DRIFT
AWAY.

(Lights up on MARTIN, who has been sitting at his desk throughout BOB's song. He rises, removes his sweater and spectacles. He is now JON, and JON speaks to the audience. Piano continues under the speech.)