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Dramatic Publishing

High School!

CONFIDENTIAL



Comedy/Drama with songs
Book by Dan Ahearn and Janet Reed
Music and lyrics by
Russ Kaplan and Sara Wordsworth

High School CONFIDENTIAL

Comedy/Drama with songs. By Dan Ahearn and Janet Reed. Music and lyrics by Russ Kaplan and Sara Wordsworth. Cast: 6 to 14m., 6 to 20w., 1 either gender, extras, singers and dancers as desired. Take a group of high-school students waiting at the bus stop on a Monday morning after a crazy weekend and watch the hilarity and anxiety explode due to unreturned texts from a girlfriend, parental pressures, friendship tensions, fashion mistakes that have “loser” written all over them, athletic ambitions and academic terrors. The teens express their expectations and uncertainties in the haunting song “High School.” The bland announcer over the loudspeaker tells everyone that fellow student Josh Becker committed suicide over the weekend. Monologues convey each student’s reaction—including hidden fears that bullying may have led to Josh’s death. “Teenage Brain” is a brilliant point-counterpoint song that captures the panic of trying to retain the massive amount of information students are expected to know in every subject they encounter. “Gimme a Break” gets faster and faster as the time for lunch, fun and hanging with friends is running out. “Ask Me to Dance” reveals the dread and excitement of going to the high-school dance. By the end of the day, many truths are confronted as the students learn to face their lives with hope. *High School Confidential* was first produced at Primary Stages, the award-winning off-Broadway theatre company. *Bare stage with props. Promotional CD available. Optional accompaniment CD available. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Royalty on application, plus music rental (scores or CD). Code: HF6.*

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High School Confidential

A Play With Songs
by
DAN AHEARN and JANET REED

Music and Lyrics
by
RUSS KAPLAN and SARA WORDSWORTH



Dramatic Publishing Company
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Book by

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Music and Lyrics by

RUSS KAPLAN and SARA WORDSWORTH

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(HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL)

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In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“Originally developed and presented by Primary Stages,
Casey Childs, Executive Producer, Andrew Leynse, Artistic Director,
Elliot Fox, Managing Director in New York City, October 2011.”

High School Confidential was performed in New York City on October 28 & 30, 2010, at 59E59 Theatres, presented by Primary Stages; Casey Childs, executive producer; Andrew Leynse, artistic director; and Elliot Fox, managing director).

Director.....Michelle Bossy
Assistant Director, Choreographer Taylor Haven-Holt

With the following cast:

Eddie..... Javier Spivey
Crystal, Beth.....Kennebrew Taylor
David, Terence Curtiss Cook
Jenni, CC, Heather, April Hollis Alpert
Jack Adrian Richburg
Echo.....Zoe Wolfe
Keith Phil Maldari
Robert, Phillip Jose Useche
Lisa, BB, Cassie Sarah Weiss
Emma, Evie, Tracy..... Caitelin McCoy
Dixon..... Daniel Froot
Shannon, Laura, Mom..... Katie Welles
PA Announcer..... Taylor Haven-Holt

NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHTS

In the fall of 2010, Casey Childs, the executive producer of the off-Broadway theatre company Primary Stages, approached us to write a play about teenagers that could be performed in high schools. *High School Confidential* was developed over the course of a year, with Michelle Bossy, associate artistic director of Primary Stages, directing. *High School Confidential* portrays a single day in the life of today's teens. Three different companies of teenage actors performed in three workshop productions. Each company's teens were terrific performers and invaluable bogusness detectors.

We had always wanted to include music in the play, so in the second workshop, Childs and Bossy brought in composer Russ Kaplan and lyricist Sara Wordsworth to create three original songs for *High School Confidential*. They were so successful that, for the third workshop, a fourth song, "Teenage Brain," was added. While the play can be performed without music, including the four songs significantly adds to the energy, fun and spirit of the production.

We have tried to make *High School Confidential* as realistic and true to life as possible. Though the play deals with difficult themes, our goal, as playwrights, was to bring these subjects to life with the greatest possible sensitivity and good taste. If there are scenes or language that you still feel would be inappropriate for your audience, you may make small cuts in the script where you feel it is necessary. All we ask is that you approach the material in the spirit that it is offered, to give the play a chance to be heard and to give student actors an opportunity to express their feelings with humor, hope and sympathy for the challenges posed by their real lives.

CAST NOTES

In the workshops, the play was performed by 12 actors (6 men and 6 women) who sang, danced and acted multiple roles. The play was designed to accommodate different cast sizes and can be performed by as many as 42 actors or as few as 12. We have provided the character breakdown at the end of the script for 12 actors that we used to show how the roles may be divided up. Feel free to devise your own casting scheme to suit your particular needs. In all productions, however, we feel it's best if the actor playing Eddie only plays that one part. Eddie is a kind of master of ceremonies and his consistent presence will help ground the audience in the play's continuity throughout. The PA Announcer should sound like an adult and be either pre-recorded, or spoken into a microphone offstage.

SCENE TITLES

The individual scene titles should not be spoken aloud in production. The titles are meant only as scene identifiers and to give clues to the thrust of the scene for the actors and director. If the technical possibility exists and you think it would add to the impact of your production, you could project the scene titles on a screen or back wall. But under no circumstances should an actor speak these titles as lines in the play.

High School Confidential

PRIMARY CHARACTERS

EDDIE : A budding student filmmaker; high energy; a satirical wise guy.

CRYSTAL: Takes risks with boys; best friends with Lisa.

DAVID: Smart; a bit cynical except where Beth is concerned.

BETH: Technology freak; “friends” with David.

JENNI: Most popular girl in school; straight A’s; president of practically everything.

JACK: Athletic; optimistic; wants a career in the military, like his dad.

ECHO: Dresses and acts Goth; loves Albert Camus; appears more certain of herself than she really is.

KEITH: Lots of potential but deliberately wasting his life.

ROBERT: Brilliant student; ought to be in college already.

LISA: A good girl who tries to fit in; best friends with Crystal.

EMMA: Nervous, worried; afflicted with a “helicopter mom” (always hovering).

DIXON: A good-looking, restless slacker who knows there’s more to life than being cool but doesn’t exactly know what.

SHANNON: Very good student; very grown up; competitive. Leader.

MOM: Worried worried worried.

BB: Nice but potentially a “mean girl.” Hero-worships Shannon.

CC: A born sidekick. A bit of a space cadet.
TERENCE: Keith's friend and partner in self-destruction.
CASSIE: A victim of circumstance and her too-trusting nature.
PHILLIP: Helplessly waiting for some nice girl to run his life.
TRACY: That nice girl.
APRIL: Knows who she is and what she wants.
LAURA: Not so sure of who she is and what she wants.
PA ANNOUNCER: The voice of the bureaucracy: bored, soul-dead.

OTHER CHARACTERS

INTERVIEWED STUDENTS (GIRLS 1-6, GUYS 1-6)
TEST TAKERS (ENGLISH, HISTORY, MATH AND FRENCH) – at least 2 for FRENCH
RAPPER

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. High School.....	14
2. Teenage Brain	27
3. Gimme a Break.....	52
4. Ask Me to Dance.....	72
5. High School (Reprise).....	87

High School Confidential

AT RISE: *The Bus Stop.*

(Lights up on a group of high school students in frozen tableau, waiting for the school bus. Spotlight on EDDIE, who enters videoing the audience with a professional-looking camera [not a phone]. He lowers his camera and addresses the audience. The other students remain frozen in position.)

EDDIE. Fade in, people! This is an Eddie Smith Production. That's me. Eddie. It's Monday and we're rubbing our eyes, blinking in disbelief: It's the beginning of another week of high school and we all feel PRETTY GOOD ABOUT IT. After all, these are the best years of our lives, right? A worried nation turns its bloodshot eyes to their golden hopes for the future and asks The Question: Are the KIDS ALL RIGHT? Are they coping? How do they *really* feel? Wass up, Wankstas?! Let's find out! This Monday morning the Big Electronic Hall Monitor in the sky asks YOU: Are you learning to fit in? Is your attitude adjusted yet? What's TAKING YOU SO LONG? You're not getting any younger! It's Monday 7 a.m. We're at the dawn of Total Information Awareness! That's right, Big Brother is watching you! *And* reading your minds. But what's really going on in there between your ears? Teen fans want to know!

(EDDIE's light fades and he joins the others in tableau. The characters do not interact with one another as they speak their inner thoughts to the audience. Lights up on students. CRYSTAL addresses the audience.)

Monday Morning Bus Boogie

CRYSTAL. You wake up and there's that moment: You see the sunlight, hear the birds, the world is beautiful. And then you remember everything sucks.

DAVID *(texting)*. Beth! Sent like fifteen texts! Not a peep.

JENNI *(texting, very happy)*. Tweet! Tweet!

JACK. Got up at 5. Did 50 pushups. Ran a mile. *(Military voice.)* HOO-AH!

ECHO *(holding a coffee cup)*. Which one of these freaks shall I sit next to today?

EDDIE *(reading text message)*. We have a biology test?!

KEITH. This is your brain, Keith: fried by the weekend and about to be devoured by the zombie hordes.

DAVID. Calm down, David. Beth'll be in touch. *(Shaking his cell phone.)* Why doesn't she answer me?!

ROBERT *(holding an unopened, large red umbrella)*. Why did I bring this umbrella?

LISA. Is anyone looking at my too tight polka dot dress?

EMMA. Talk about tight.

JENNI. That is one ugly dress.

DIXON. Cute girl. What's with the dots?

ECHO. Polka dots, Lisa? What an attention whore.

SHANNON. Why does Robert have an umbrella?

ECHO. "Look at me look at me look at me."

KEITH. It is so not going to rain, dude.

JENNI. Why is that kid holding a big, red dorky umbrella?

ROBERT (*imitating his mother*). “It’s going to rain, Robert.

Al Roker says so.” Mom, who cares what Al Roker says?!

DIXON. Bring on the rain. Got a poncho in my Patagonia

Daily Grind shoulder bag. \$69. Made in Vietnam. So cool.

JACK. Game will be rained out! Crap.

CRYSTAL. My hair is going to freak out in the rain.

LISA. This dress is suffocating me.

EMMA. SATs this Saturday. I’m ready. Thank you, Mr.

Handley.

ROBERT. Need to finish that extra credit work for Mr.

Handley.

EMMA. Mr. Handley’s so handsome.

SHANNON. I wish Mr. Handley liked me more.

LISA. I hate my body! WHY DO I EAT?

EMMA. I wish I had a big fat muffin. That coffee looks so good.

ECHO. Coffee. Mmmmmm. Why is my bus stop so full of freaking losers?

DAVID. I’m a freak on Facebook! My mother’s on my wall! GET OFF MY WALL!

KEITH. Wish I had a car. Wouldn’t have to wait for the stupid bus with a bunch of emos.

EDDIE. Got to get a seat and cram for the biology test.

Chill, Eddie. You listened. You remember a lot.

DIXON (*looking at ROBERT*). Get back, weasel.

EDDIE. For instance, a weasel is ... a kind of rodent? Yes!

No. Yes?

LISA. I’ve got to get on the bus first. I need to go in the back and hide.

EMMA. No bus.

JACK. My new program is really working. Coach says I'm getting strong. *(Like an announcer.)* ARMY STRONG. HOO-AH!

ROBERT. Where's the bus?

DAVID. Bus bus bus ...

SHANNON. I need a 4.0. I need a new laptop. I need a boyfriend.

LISA. I wish I had a boyfriend who could morph into a wolf. And run home and get me another dress.

EDDIE. A wolf is a social animal. The top wolf is a called a—

LISA. I need an *alpha male*.

EDDIE. Alpha! I think. Or is that a vegetable?

DAVID *(another text he's gotten)*. GET A LIFE, MOM!

SHANNON. Mr. Handley thinks that Robert is so smart. I'm smart. Smart enough to know the sun is shining, Robert.

ROBERT. Please God, let it rain. Vindicate the umbrella.

EDDIE. I wonder what she looks like under all those polka dots.

DIXON *(looking at CRYSTAL)*. How come I never noticed her before? Great hair.

CRYSTAL. Why is Dixon Kane looking at me? Is my hair frizzing out already?

EDDIE. I wonder what everyone here looks like naked.

DIXON. Echo is so cool. I'm going to sit next to her.

ECHO. Kid with the umbrella? Classic anal retentive. *(Drinks.)* Mmmmmm. I love you, coffee. I really mean that.

(The sound of a siren approaches and passes.)

SHANNON. I hate that sound.

ROBERT. What now?

ECHO. Something bad.

KEITH. Josh Becker. Why did he do it?

DAVID. Car wreck.

JACK. Chaos. Destruction. Death.

EMMA. Oh God.

LISA. What if there's a bus accident and I die and I have to spend eternity in this too tight polka dot dress?

SHANNON. Bus is coming!

JENNI. Bus is coming!

LISA. Let me on first!

DAVID. Bus!

EDDIE. Bus!

ALL. Busssssssssssssssssss!

LISA. Bus driver, stop here! Stop here! If he stops in front of me, then my dress is not so heinous, it's not too tight, and polka dots are totally awesome! HE STOPPED IN FRONT OF ME! WAIT! WAIT! I can't lift my leg! My dress is too tight! Damn it!

ALL. Busssssssssssssssssss!

(The others pass her by and get on the bus leaving LISA behind, as lights fade. BUS HORN. School hallway. Lights up on four lockers upstage as students rush around talking with one another, getting their books and getting ready for their classes to begin. As the announcement is heard, lights go to half and students pause to listen.)

PA ANNOUNCER *(bored already)*. Remember, students: Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll be seeing

stars. Mr. Krackauer asks that students refrain from loitering in the hallways of the school. KEEP MOVING! And have a great day.

(Lights up and students immediately loiter: talking, laughing, playing jokes. ROBERT catches up with BETH.)

ROBERT. Did you hear about Josh Becker?

BETH. Nobody ever tells me anything. What happened?

ROBERT. You won't believe it.

(Intro for song begins.)

(#1: "High School")

(Students simultaneously slam their locker doors on the downbeat.)

STUDENT 1.

SPRINT TO HOMEROOM
RUNNING LATE
I'M RUSHING FLOOR TO FLOOR TO FLOOR
WHAT FOR?
SAME SHIT EVERY DAY

EDDIE. Smile everybody! You're on YouTube!

STUDENT 2.

IN A HURRY
PUSHING THROUGH
TO GET FROM CLASS TO CLASS TO CLASS
I'D PASS
BUT I DON'T HAVE A SAY

STUDENTS 1 & 2.

SENTENCED HERE FOR FOUR LONG YEARS
IT'S ACADEMIC JAIL
I COULDN'T GIVE A CRAP
AND YET I'M SCARED TO DEATH I'LL FAIL

ALL.

HIGH SCHOOL
CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING, IT'S PRETTY LAME
HIGH SCHOOL
PLAY THE GAME, PLAY THE GAME, PLAY THE GAME

STUDENT 3.

OFF TO HOMEROOM
THEN TO MATH
TO FACE A TEST A TEST A TEST
I GUESSED
I'LL NEVER USE THIS STUFF

STUDENT 4.

ENGLISH, SPANISH
SCIENCE, GYM
MY EYELIDS CLOSE AND CLOSE AND CLOSE
IT BLOWS
BY NOON, I'VE HAD ENOUGH

STUDENTS 3 & 4.

COLLEGE LIFE IS ON THE BRAIN
I'M ACHING TO MOVE ON
BUT SECRETLY I WONDER
WILL I MISS IT WHEN I'M GONE?

ALL.

HIGH SCHOOL
SIMULTANEOUSLY A FREE MAN AND A SLAVE

HIGH SCHOOL
RIDE THE WAVE, RIDE THE WAVE, RIDE THE WAVE

(Lights to half for announcement. Students pause to listen.)

PA ANNOUNCER. Remember: Success isn't a result of spontaneous combustion. You have to set yourself on fire!
EDDIE. What?!
ALL. Huh?

(Lights back up. Students move.)

ALL.
HIGH SCHOOL
WHERE YOUR ONLY JOB IS TO MAKE IT OUT ALIVE
HIGH SCHOOL
JUST SURVIVE, JUST SURVIVE, JUST SURVIVE

(BELL RINGS. Students, contrary to instructions, loiter in the hallway, silently going about their business with each other. Spotlight on EDDIE as he addresses the audience.)

EDDIE. So all the busses have landed. And a thousand kids are pouring into school. But before we cut away to serious academic achievement, which can be, let's face it, a little slow *cinematically*, let's focus on the up close and personal.

(EDDIE mingles with students in the hall. Lights to half for announcement. Students pause to listen.)

PA ANNOUNCER. Students caught using cell phones in class will have their phones seized and held in Mr. Krackauer's Office until 3 o'clock. Have a nice day.

(Lights up full. Everyone's texting on their phones. Students exit, heading for class. Stage clears except for BETH and DAVID.)

Technology One

(DAVID catches up to BETH as she walks down the hall, texting.)

DAVID. Finally! What's wrong with your phone?

BETH *(texting)*. Uh. Nothing?

DAVID. Obviously. But I've been texting you all morning, Beth.

BETH. Why? What's up?

DAVID. Just wanted to talk. My Dad ...

BETH. What about him?

DAVID. He said that I should be studying harder if I want to go to Harvard. And I said I don't necessarily want to go to Harvard. Not if it's going to be this big deal all the time and all this pressure. And besides you want to go to Stanford. You, Beth, not my dad. So maybe if I'm going to stress out, I shouldn't try for Harvard. I should go to ... Are you listening?

BETH *(texting)*. Sure. Totally, David.

DAVID. What did I say?

BETH *(texting)*. You were saying how your parents want you to work hard and like that.

DAVID. No. Exactly what was I saying?

BETH (*always texting*). Hello? What am I? Your memory stick?

DAVID. You can't tell me, can you?

BETH. Of course not. I'm here to give you the headline, the takeaway, as it were.

DAVID. You weren't listening.

BETH. Yes, I was.

DAVID. You can't text and listen at the same time.

BETH. Sure.

DAVID. No.

BETH. David. (*Sighs puts phone aside.*) I've heard it before. I knew exactly where you were going after your first and, I'm sorry, only thought: Your parents drive you crazy. Newsflash: That's what parents do. (*Beat.*) So, I thought I'd do a little electronic maintenance while you vented.

DAVID. You were bored?

BETH. Well ...

DAVID. Bored?!

BETH. That's a very negative way of looking at it. I was making an efficient use of our time together.

DAVID. By playing with a machine while I'm talking to you?

BETH. It's called multitasking, my friend.

DAVID. It's rude. And why are you saying "my friend" like that?

BETH. It's just an expression. And technically it's not a machine.

DAVID. Who cares? You pay more attention to a phone than you do to me.

BETH. I never knew you were so needy, David.

DAVID. I'm not needy. Why do you say I'm needy?
WHAT IS NEEDY ABOUT WANTING HUMAN

CONTACT WITH MY GIRLFRIEND? IS THAT SO WRONG! (*Realizing he's shouting, he calms down and speaks normally.*) I just want your full attention.

BETH. Do you hear yourself?

DAVID. Everyone in the school heard me, Beth. That doesn't make me *needy*!

BETH. I don't mean needy in a bad way.

DAVID. I guess it's a compliment.

BETH. I wouldn't go that far.

DAVID. These things are ruining our lives. They're intrusive. Someday they're going to implant them in our brains.

BETH. I know. And that will be better, 'cause it won't be so intrusive when I have to take a call or answer a text. I will appear to be giving my complete attention to you. (*Pause.*) What's the matter?

DAVID. You never answer my texts.

BETH. Ah.

DAVID. I spent all last night and this morning waiting to hear from you.

BETH. But I don't need to text you. I know we'll see each other. (*Sees a call has come in.*) Ooo! I gotta take this.

DAVID. Am I going to see you later?

BETH. I'll text you. (*On the phone.*) Hi! (*She exits.*)

DAVID (*shouting to her*). AND I'M NOT NEEDY!

(A dejected DAVID exits, passing SHANNON who's checking her cell phone. SHANNON stops in shock, and calls to CC and BB who are at their lockers to join her downstage.)