

A sample of some of the many hours of drama written by
The Ghostwriter for television, audio and theatre.
This is an extract from 'Schoolboy Blues,' a play by
premiered at The Rose Tavern Theatre, London.

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**1969. A ROMAN CATHOLIC BOYS SCHOOL. O'BRIAN.
ADDRESSES HIS FORM.**

O'BRIAN:

....I Believe that this is the third occasion I have
had to keep this class back after school this term. And
I am not at all sure that I am happy about that! Not at
all sure! I find myself in a confused state of mind; I
don't know whether I am more perturbed that someone
should have chosen to inscribe on the blackboard the
notion that Father Connor indulges in the practice of
self-abuse or whether I am outraged that a group of O-
level English candidates shortly to take their English
literature and language examinations believe that the
colloquial phrase for the practice is spelt with a C as
oppose to the customary K! I am here to tell you that
Father Connor is understandably upset at being
described in public as a Wancer!

You will all report to the discipline room at once.
Good evening to you gentlemen!

**FROM SILENCE COMES ANOTHER VOICE - IN A DIFFERENT
PLACE.**

VOICE;

Next....(A DOOR HEARD TO OPEN AND CLOSE)...Bend

over...(THE SOUND OF A STRAP BEATING A BOTTOM FOUR TIMES)...You may go.....(A DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES)...Next.... (Etc., etc).

THE ABOVE REPEATS UNDER THE SONG 'SCHOOLBOY BLUES'.AT THE END OF THE SONG WE HEAR BEN WOOD - IN ANOTHER PLACE, ANOTHER TIME.

BEN;

Nineteen sixty nine must have been a trying year for our form master, O'Brian. We were probably no worse than any other group of thirty-two sixteen year olds but he assured us that we were the worse class he'd suffered in twenty years of teaching. Dear Old O'Brian, I look back on him with fond memories.....

HE IS INTERRUPTED FROM ANOTHER TIME

O'BRIAN;

'With fond memories?' Good God, Wood you were always florid in your prose but now I see that you have perfected the art of hyperbole!

BEN;

Call it poetic licence!

O'BRIAN;

Poetic balls! So what's all this, your memoirs?

BEN;

You could call it laying ghosts.

O'BRIAN;

I am waiting (BEAT) with enthusiasm!

BEN;

O'Brian, when not teaching, was involved in the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland. Most weekends he flew to Belfast to throw a brick or two and chant a

slogan...

O'BRIAN;

The authentic voice of the English middle class!

BEN;

....It amused the four of us enormously: Tim Martin, Colin Rightly, Jim McGorman and myself. The idea of a second generation Irishman who'd been born no nearer Belfast than East Croydon, going all that way to heave bricks...

O'BRIAN;

And there was me thinking you'd look on me as a sort of modern Pimpernell!

BEN;

...mind you the four of us were always amused by the doings of the Irish. The only English boys in a school for London Irish Catholics. Now wonder we stuck together.

O'BRIAN;

Stuck together!! If Rightly hadn't been found with that girl who worked in the kitchens, we'd have written you off as bum boys!

BEN;

We'd have been alright with most of the priests then!

O'BRIAN;

Now there's blasphemy. Did you ever hear how we found Rightly; in their moment of ecstasy they lay back on the hot plate and she's burnt so bad that she has to see the matron. Now the matron's no fool, how else do you burn your bum on a hot plate when you're cooking the staff supper! She figured it out in a flash.

BEN;

So how did you know it was Rightly?

O'BRIAN;

He was the only boy we could find with a single mark round his flies. He was a good man Rightly. He said nothing for the sake of the girl. We beat him anyway, just to be on the safe side. But carry on; I interrupted you.

BEN:

Thank you. Of the four of us Rightly was the most advanced, with the girls anyway. He started doing what we talked about much earlier than the rest of us. And it wasn't just with the kitchen girl. Oh no Rightly wasn't one to be put off by a burnt fly. He moved from exploit to exploit

O'BRIAN;

Is that so? Well, and there was I thinking that it was only the once.

BEN; (READING)

We weren't all boarders. In fact, of the four of us only Rightly stayed in the boarding house. Considering that he was constantly under school supervision he was amazingly active. I dread to think what he'd have been like if he'd been a day boy. The school Caretaker had a daughter called Sharon. Sharon wasn't too bright but what she lacked in her head she made up for in her body.

RIGHTLY;

The biggest tits I've ever seen on a girl. Bloody enormous!

BEN; (READING)

He'd been pursuing her for weeks. He used to wait for

her by the bus stop near the school and as she got off the bus to walk the half mile back to their father's house which was at the back of our playing fields he'd.....

RIGHTLY:

...Try to chat her up. It took months, well three weeks... more like softening her up really.

HE FALLS INTO STEP NEXT TO SHARON AS SHE WALKS BY.

RIGHTLY ;

Have you heard the Abbey Road Album.

SHARON ;

No I don't like the Stones.

RIGHTLY;

It's the Beatles.

SHARON:

Oh

RIGHTLY;

Do you want to hear it?

SHARON ;

Don't mind.

RIGHTLY:

How was school?

SHARON ;

Alright.

RIGHTLY;

What O's are you doing?

SHARON :

Domestic Science, Art, Needlework and English.

RIGHTLY ;

Oh.... great. What books are you doing in English?
Are you doing 1984, we are?, I could help you with
it.

SHARON ;

No.

RIGHTLY ;

Well, you could help me with it then.

SHARON;

I'm not doing books - only Language.

RIGHTLY :

Do you want a hand? I did Language last year.

SHARON ;

What grade did you get?

RIGHTLY;

Oh it was alright. I could help you.

SHARON :

Can you sew? It's the sewing I want to get.

HE LETS SHARON WALK OFF.

BEN; (READING)

But he didn't give up.

RIGHTLY;

You see boys I think I must be ill. I'm not like you
lot. I need it more than most people. Ever since
I was thirteen I've needed it. It's like an itch
I can't scratch.

BEN ;

With Sharon a lot of lesser men would have given up....

RIGHTLY;

Not me. I see it as a challenge, like Everest.
Maybe it's because I'm a border, something to do with
being confined to barracks. I look on Sharon
as being my tunnel of escape out of the prison camp.

BEN;

To some extent she was more of a wooden horse.

SHARON RETURNS TO RIGHTLY.

RIGHTLY;

Where do you go in the evenings?

SHARON ;

Go?

RIGHTLY;

Don't you ever go out?

SHARON:

Some of us from school went to the Astoria last week.

RIGHTLY;

What d'you see?

SHARON ;

"Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush. "

RIGHTLY;

Oh great. It's a good film. It's er er. . .well
you know it's got some good bits in it. You know
where he and her ... in the shop, in that bed.

SHARON;

I didn't stay 'til the end. I thought it was
boring. I only went 'cos I thought it was going
to be a cartoon.

RIGHTLY; (TO HIMSELF)

Oh Christ!

BEN; (READING)

For a sixteen year old he showed amazing will power.. .

O'BRIAN;

If only he'd shown as much application to his studies.

BEN;

He was learning in his way.

RIGHTLY;

I learnt younger than most that the World is full
of surprises.

SHARON RETURNS TO HIS SIDE AND THEY WALK AGAIN.

SHARON:

How come you're always by the bus stop then?

RIGHTLY;

Coincidence....well I like our little chats actually.

SHARON;

Have you got any Rubbers? I don't want to take
no risks.

RIGHTLY :

Bloody Hell!!!

SHARON;

My Dad's out tonight come round to the house about
seven.

SHE WALKS OFF.

RIGHTLY;

Bloody hell!

O'BRIAN;

Bloody hell! Rightly and the Caretaker's daughter.

I'm in a state of shock.

BEN;

So was Rightly. He told us the next day....

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