

DON'T BE THAT GUY

by D. Brent Holland

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DON'T BE THAT GUY

A Comedic One Act

by D. Brent Holland

SYNOPSIS: From public displays of affection, to an overage of selfies, these teen rebels want all of their classmates to know not to be “That Guy.” A funny, but certainly true look into the average high school, this is a play for the students, about the students!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 females, 3 males, 1 either)

- CALEB (m).....A leader of this group who has a lot of pet peeves. *(68 lines)*
- BRANDON (m)Caleb’s best friend. Very sarcastic. *(59 lines)*
- DREW (m).....Easy going and likeable. Shameless. *(56 lines)*
- RIVER (m/f)Opinionated. Prone to monologue. *(13 lines)*
- DANI (f)Plays the clingy girlfriend, but in reality, is very likeable and funny. *(63 lines)*
- SHELBY (f).....The voice of reason in the group. *(40 lines)*
- ANA (f).....A realist who is annoyed by her fellow teens. *(27 lines)*
- CHELSEA (f).....Snarky and well-liked by the others. *(41 lines)*
- BELLA (f).....Kristin’s best friend and very passionate about not being that guy. *(23 lines)*
- KRISTIN (f).....Energetic and funny. *(32 lines)*

DURATION: 40 minutes.

TIME: Present day.

SETTING: Local high school.

CASTING NOTE: All ten cast members are average high school students between 9th and 12th grade. If you need to add a student or two in the cast, feel free to divide lines from characters with larger roles to accommodate your cast size. You can also divide River’s monologues between several students.

SET

Very basic. Minor set pieces can be used but are certainly not required. The stage can be blank to begin with chairs and boxes added or pre-positioned as desired.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The show is simplistic by design but could be expanded by directors with the desire to do so. Blocking was designed to engage and almost include the audience, as characters in the show are often speaking directly to the audience.

Stage directions were given for students' entrances and exits, but if preferred, the students can remain on stage at the director's discretion and react to the scenes happening around them.

Anytime a line is spoken by "ALL," it's the onstage actors in the scene saying "Don't be that guy!," not the entire cast.

COSTUMES

The characters are normal high school students and should be dressed in attire appropriate to your high school dress code.

SOUND EFFECTS

- Various phone sounds

PROPS

- cell phones
- a blanket
- wallet
- ukulele
- 2 fake guns (can be pantomimed)
- a knife (can be pantomimed)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following behavioral examples were collected at the suggestion of my high school students over the past couple of years and put into this form. My kids were a big part of this process and I thank them for the countless suggestions they have given me.

DO NOT COPY

AT START: BRANDON and CALEB are walking while having a conversation in the hall of their school. DANI, BRANDON'S recent ex-girlfriend, walks past the two boys in an obvious state of mourning. Her sadness is palpable and awkward. As she nears the edge of the stage, SHELBY enters and sees DANI.

SHELBY: Are you OK?

DANI: (*Looking back at BRANDON.*) Yeah... I'm OK. It's just (*With serious sadness.*) been a rough week.

BRANDON rolls eyes at CALEB.

SHELBY: Is there anything I can do?

DANI: (*Glancing at BRANDON.*) No... I'll get through this... it's just hard. (*Exits, still mourning.*)

CALEB addresses the audience.

CALEB: Brandon (*BRANDON waves.*) and Dani broke up what... three?

BRANDON: (*Correcting.*) Four

CALEB: Four days ago. And you dated for...

BRANDON: A month.

DANI walks back on to the edge of the stage.

DANI: Five weeks!

BRANDON: Close enough!

DANI: (*Extremely hurt.*) Fine. (*Resumes her mourning and exits sadly.*)

CALEB: So, about a month. Anyway, so Brandon decided to cut things off.

BRANDON: She's a psycho.

Sound of DANI crying from offstage.

CALEB: And this is where we are. The first couple of days there was this...

BRANDON: Total denial. She blew my phone up with texts... at first, they were friendly enough, but just weird. Then came the texts asking, almost begging to get back together. Look... I felt bad... I really did. The whole thing was just...

CALEB: *(Continuing his thought.)* Extra. *(To audience.)* Dude... it was insane. I mean, literally from day one, she was like totally connected. *(CALEB wraps his whole body around BRANDON.)* We have third block together and it was totally grossing the rest of us out.

BRANDON: I am appropriately ashamed.

CALEB: It was a pretty harsh month, but then the break-up... that's what we are really going to focus on here.

BRANDON: So, four days ago I sent her a text...

SHELBY, who has been busy texting a friend, stops.

SHELBY: We'll talk about why you don't text a message like that in a bit.

BRANDON and CALEB shoo SHELBY offstage.

BRANDON: So, I sent her a text that tried to explain that I needed some space.

CALEB: The wording sucked. I saw it only after it was sent. She really didn't get it, but after it was explained further...

BRANDON: She totally spazzed out. It's been so bad.

CALEB: She literally comes to class now...

As CALEB explains this, it happens... SHELBY and several other students enter. CALEB, BRANDON, SHELBY, and the other students sit in chairs. DANI enters, draped in a blanket. There is a seat next to BRANDON, but DANI looks at it sadly, sighs heavily, and walks to a different seat. Everyone is looking at her as she starts quietly sobbing.

CALEB: *(To audience.)* Remember... they only dated a month!

DANI: Five weeks!

As BRANDON tries to ignore DANI, CALEB continues.

CALEB: Now this is the important part and I am not just talking to Dani, or to girls... but to everyone. First of all, it's obvious that Dani has never been dumped before.

More sobs from DANI.

CALEB: And the first time you're really dumped, it hits the ego... ya know? It's one of those things you only see from the other side, but if you've never been through this before you need to listen so that you won't look like this (*Points at DANI.*) one day. It's not that she really wants Brandon... I mean, he's not that great a catch really.

BRANDON looks offended.

CALEB: No offense. But Dani is going about all of this the wrong way. What does she want out of this? What's her end game?

The scene resets. DANI exits. CALEB retakes his seat. DANI enters, just as sad but this time....

BRANDON: (*Jumping up.*) Dani... we need to talk!

DANI: You've hurt me so bad, Brandon.

BRANDON: I know! And I'm so sorry! Seeing how sad you have been has totally made me realize that I made the wrong decision. I want you back. I went back and liked your twitter posts about our two and three week anniversaries! I re-tweeted the pic you took of us in front of Burger King!

DANI: You did?

BRANDON: I love you so much!

DANI: I love you, too!

DANI attaches herself to BRANDON like CALEB did before and freezes.

CALEB: This never happens.

BRANDON: (*To DANI.*) Can you get off me now?

DANI goes back to sadness and slinks offstage. SHELBY and ALL other students follow, exiting, leaving only CALEB and BRANDON onstage.

CALEB: *(To audience.)* You know what the opposite of love is? No... it's not hate. Hate shows you still care. Hate shows you still have feelings. The opposite of love is indifference. If you get dumped and you want to win, you can't be like Dani. The first time, and pretty much every time you get dumped it'll hurt but you can't show it! Show everyone that this is not the end of the world! Move on and keep movin' on! So, let's go back to the beginning...

BRANDON and CALEB resume their top of show positions. This time DANI enters, sees BRANDON and frowns at him... looking really pissed-off. As DANI gets to the other side of the stage, SHELBY enters, meeting DANI.

SHELBY: Geez. You OK?

DANI: *(Angrily.)* I'm fine!

CALEB: Stop! *(DANI looks back at him.)* That was anger...

BRANDON: It was an improvement though.

CALEB: True... but we're looking for a win. We're going for total social acceptability.

DANI still looks angry.

CALEB: Try again.

DANI exits as the scene resets. SHELBY remains onstage. DANI enters this time, completely relaxed.

DANI: *(As she passes CALEB and BRANDON. Nonchalantly.)* Hey guys. *(Walks to where SHELBY is standing.)*

SHELBY: Hey Dani!

DANI: Hey... what are you doing after school today?

SHELBY: Nothing, Why?

DANI: I want to go to the new trampoline park... you in?

SHELBY: Yeah. I don't work today. Let's do it!

DANI and SHELBY exit.

BRANDON: You know... I knew that was coming, but it still kinda stings.

CALEB: I know right? *(To audience.)* Don't show them you are hurting. Express your feelings once and let it go. You can't make someone want you and trying to only makes you look like a hump.

SHELBY and DANI enter. DANI is no longer the distressed girlfriend.

DANI: The moral of the story...

SHELBY: And really the whole purpose of this is to let you know...

DANI: That I won't be the person who does that.

BRANDON: I won't either. Because guys can be just as bad.

CALEB: This is important. We're here to change the behavior that makes us all want to puke while walking down the halls.

ANA: *(Enters.)* There are a lot of puke inducing behaviors and while we could have put on some kind of dramatic play, we knew that we are mostly going to be doing this show for other high schoolers so we thought we would turn this into a big public service announcement on how to make our high school a better place.

ALL: I will not be that guy!

ANA: That's our motto. Don't be that guy. By the word guy, we're using it as gender neutral, like "all you guys."

SHELBY: They get it.

ANA: So, that's what we're doing!

CALEB walks up to ANA; SHELBY has positioned herself across the stage from them. DANI exits.

CALEB: So, have you talked to her yet? *(Indicating SHELBY.)*

ANA: You only texted me about it ten minutes ago.

CALEB: I know... but I was hoping you could handle it quickly.

ANA: I said I would.

CALEB: Sorry. I just want to do this right. What do you think I should do? I really want her to like me.

ANA: I don't know...

CALEB: You've been her best friend since elementary school! You know her better than anyone!

ANA: (*Caving in.*) OK... well if you really want to make a good impression ask her to go see a movie but set up a group to go so it won't be a pressure situation.

CALEB: OK... why?

ANA: Shelby is shyer than she lets on. Even if she likes you, she will have more fun on a first date if there are other people around. Also, she loves movies... we go all the time.

CALEB: You think she'll go?

ANA: If you get a group together to go to the movies, I can guarantee it, she'll go.

CALEB: You're the best, Ana!

CALEB leaves ANA and crosses to SHELBY.

SHELBY: Hey Caleb!

CALEB: Hey!

SHELBY: What did you get on the test?

CALEB: Eighty-eight. You?

SHELBY: Ninety-one. I missed the questions on the layers of the skin.

CALEB: Me too! So, I was wondering...

SHELBY: Yes?

CALEB: You busy this weekend?

SHELBY: I dunno. Not really. Why?

CALEB: So, I was wondering if you wanted to go with me to the mud bog tonight?

SHELBY: Mud bog? You mean with like monster trucks?

CALEB: Yeah! They're having one tonight. Want to come?

SHELBY: Is this a thing you guys do a lot? Who else is going?

CALEB: Well, I was just thinking it could be us. We could hit up dinner after.

SHELBY: (*Not digging it.*) I would really like to, but I promised Ana I would go to a movie with her. Totally forgot until right now.

CALEB: OK then. Well, maybe next week.

SHELBY: Yeah... maybe. (*Exits.*)

CALEB crosses back to ANA.

CALEB: You didn't tell me you already had plans with her tonight.

ANA: What are you talking about?

CALEB: I asked her if she wanted to go out tonight, but she said she already has plans with you!

ANA: I close tonight. I don't know why she'd say that.

CALEB: I asked her if she wanted to go with me to the mud bog tonight and...

ANA: Mud bog?

CALEB: Yeah, it's where they take big trucks....

ANA: I know what a mud bog is. I thought you were going to ask her to go to a movie. Do you already have a group going to the mud bog?

CALEB: No. I thought it would be better if it were just the two of us.

ANA: So instead of asking her to go with a group to the movies, you asked her for a one on one date to a mud bog?

CALEB: Yeah, and she totally shot me down. I thought you said she would go!

Disgusted, ANA exits as CALEB crosses to BRANDON.

CALEB: Well, that sucks.

BRANDON: What?

CALEB: I asked Shelby to go to the mud bog with me on Friday night and got totally shot down.

BRANDON: Sorry man.

CALEB: Not a biggie, I guess. So, you want to go?

BRANDON: I was planning on it already... but I thought you traded with Josh at work and were on tonight.

CALEB: (*Realizing.*) That's tonight? I thought that was next week!

BRANDON: Nah, that's tonight.

CALEB: Crap. I don't want to work tonight!

BRANDON: You shouldn't have traded.

CALEB: I thought it was next week! I'm gonna call in.

BRANDON: Don't do that.

CALEB: Come on man... it's a mud bog!

BRANDON: (*Seeing the logic.*) OK then... go ahead and do it.

CALEB: I've never called in before. What should I tell them?

BRANDON: Just tell your boss you're sick and can't come in.

CALEB: That's what everyone says.

BRANDON: They say that because it works.

CALEB: Good point. *(Picks up phone and dials.)*

BRANDON: Just be really vague about it.

CALEB: *(Into the phone.)* Hey, is Chris able to come to the phone?

(Waits.) Hey Chris. This is Caleb. Dude, I'm not going to be able to come to work tonight. *(Pause.)* Why? *(Pause.)* No, I'm not sick, but

I just got bit by a snake. *(Listens.)* I think it's poisonous, so we're headed to the hospital *(Listens.)* Yeah... my mom is driving me.

(Listens.) You just saw her in the drive through? *(BRANDON*

grimaces.) Yeah... I was... uh in the back seat... you didn't see me?

Yeah... I um... wanted a milkshake. *(Listens and looks at*

BRANDON.) You want a doctor's note for my snake bite? Well...

OK. I'll get one. See you Sunday... *(Hangs up.)* Well, that sucked.

BRANDON: Why didn't you just tell him you were sick??

CALEB exits as SHELBY enters.

SHELBY: Don't be that guy. Don't be an ask-hole.

BRANDON: I don't think we can say that.

SHELBY: Ask... with a "k." Ask-hole. A person who always asks advice and never takes it.

BRANDON: Ahhhhhh... yeah, don't be an ask-hole. I hate people like that... people that will ask over and over again but never ever do what everyone else thinks is the right thing.

SHELBY: There's a lot of ask-holes at _____. [Insert your high school here.]

CALEB enters with CHELSEA, DREW, and DANI. BRANDON exits.

CALEB: But not me, I will not be an ask-hole.

ALL: I will not be that guy!

SHELBY gets her phone out, poses, takes a picture, and posts it on social media.

CHELSEA: *(Typing on her phone.)* You are so pretty!

DREW: *(Also typing.)* Great picture!

SHELBY: *(Typing.)* Thank you!

DANI: *(To CHELSEA and DREW.)* Don't do that!!

CHELSEA: What?

DANI: That's the eighteenth selfie she's posted this week!

DREW: I know... but....

DANI: But what?

DREW: We're dating. She expects me to say something.

DANI: Every time?

DREW: Pretty much.

DANI: What about you?

CHELSEA: I'm just trying to be nice...

DANI: Have you ever seen those signs telling you not to feed the pigeons because they end up relying on people and forgetting how to forage food for themselves?

DREW: Uh... yeah.

DANI: Well it's kind of like that.

CHELSEA: I don't get it. So, Shelby's like a pigeon.

SHELBY poses and takes another picture. CHELSEA starts to type but DANI snatches her phone.

CHELSEA: Hey!

DANI: Don't feed the pigeons!

CHELSEA: I wasn't going to comment... I was just going to like it.

DANI: Nope. Almost as bad.

CHELSEA: That seems... mean.

DANI: It's not. It's just that some people can't seem to function without people constantly complimenting them. It's not healthy and it's not real.

DREW: What do you mean, "it's not real?"

DANI: Have you ever seen someone post a picture where they really didn't look all that good?

DREW: Of course.

DANI: Did you say anything?

DREW: No.

DANI: Exactly!

CHELSEA: If you can't say something nice...

DANI: But what if you're expected to say something nice. You have been programmed to compliment Shelby and she is programming herself not to feel good about herself without constant reassurance.

DREW: Wow...

DANI: I know!

CHELSEA: What can we do about it?

DANI: Well, there's this.... *(Types and speaks it.)* Looking kind of rough, Shelby... time for a haircut.

SHELBY looks abashed and immediately goes to work on her phone.

DREW: Oh my gosh... what are you doing?

DANI: Proving a point. *(Checks her phone.)* Well either Shelby has totally disappeared off social media, or she just blocked me.

SFX: DREW'S phone dings. He checks it.

DREW: Sorry... I gotta go.

DANI: Why? What's up.

DREW: I just got a text from Shelby. She says I'm not allowed to talk to you anymore.

DREW crosses to SHELBY and consoles her.

CHELSEA: Well that can't be the answer.

DANI: It isn't... I was just having fun.

CHELSEA: So, what's the answer?

DANI: Well first...

ALL: Don't be that guy.

DANI: And stop feeding people's ego. If you don't hit the like button and don't comment they won't have a reason to post. As for me, I won't let what others think of me control my life.

SHELBY: *(Putting up her phone.)* I won't either.

ALL: I will not be that guy!

RIVER enters.

RIVER: You know what I hate? Participation trophies. I know that you (*Indicating the audience.*) adults think that we're so fragile that we can't stand losing, but you know what? It's not us! We don't care! I can't think of a single one of my friends that brags about the medal they got for showing up all season and playing soccer on the last place team. I mean really... watch these things! It's always the parents who care and the parents who get offended if their kids don't get recognized. Now, I'm not talking about five-year-olds... but by the time you're my age, you should be able to handle not winning. I mean, is it really training us for life to make sure we get a trophy or an award even if we don't put in any work? One day, when I show up unshowered and dressed in the clothes I slept in to my job interview, you think the owner of the company is going to look at me and say "Well, River... you're the fourteenth best of our fourteen applicants, but what the hell, you're hired too!" No! They're going to tell me to hit the bricks and unless I figure out how to be competitive, it's going to stay that way and I'm going to end up thirty years old, still living with my parents because your generation thinks I'm too much of a snowflake to fail when I deserve to. I will not be the guy who can't handle failure. I don't need your trophy.

RIVER exits, followed by DANI and SHELBY. CHELSEA and CALEB connect and start holding hands, then embrace, showing way too much PDA.

DREW: We all hate these guys and we all know someone who is one of these guys. (*Looks at them.*) Yuck.

BELLA enters, sees them and crosses to DREW.

BELLA: Every single day.

DREW: I know.

BELLA: (*To the audience.*) Right outside of our theatre class at lunch there's this (*Indicates CHELSEA and CALEB.*) couple who just sit there and make-out. When they're not making-out, they're seeing if they can create fission and bond into one organism.

DREW: There's a rule that everyone needs to follow and it's simple. No one wants to see you make-out with another person. I realize that some of you acknowledge that now, but in the future, you're going to get a girlfriend or boyfriend and you're going to forget. Don't! It's tacky and gross and just nasty.

BELLA: It's basically announcing to the world that you've never been here before and don't know how it's done. I realize, some people are probably stunned that anyone is interested in them.

DREW: It's true.

BELLA: But in that case, while it's understandable, it's still gross.

DREW: So, to combat this, Bella, myself, and a few other drama kids started fighting back. We made a pack that we would teach people that PDA is gross.

CALEB and CHELSEA are still very close and touchy.

BELLA: This first one takes a partner and one you don't mind touching.

BELLA and DREW walk up near CHELSEA and CALEB and start hugging just as close as the original duo. After a few moments it becomes awkward and CHELSEA and CALEB move to the other side of the stage.

DREW: Now, if you want to drag it out, you could follow them from spot to spot... and we have... but you get the picture.

BELLA: The second idea we had was called, "Twenty Questions." (*Walks up to CALEB and CHELSEA.*) Excuse me... do you know where room 316 is?

CALEB and CHELSEA look a little harassed.

CHELSEA: The arts building (*Points.*) over there, I think.

BELLA: Thanks!

DREW walks up to CALEB and CHELSEA.

DREW: Hey man... do you know how much a honey bun costs in the cafeteria?

Harassed again, CALEB answers.

CALEB: No clue. Probably a dollar?

DREW: You think it's that much?

CALEB: No clue really.

DREW: What do you eat during lunch?

CALEB: *(Can't believe this is still going on.)* Uh... nothing most days.

DREW: *(To CHELSEA.)* How about you?

CHELSEA: *(Still in CALEB'S arms.)* I bring my own lunch.

DREW: Cool.

An awkward moment passes.

DREW: Did you bring lunch today?

DREW breaks back to the audience and CALEB and CHELSEA go back to embracing.

DREW: That might not be your thing, but our drama teacher has always said the first step to being a good actor is to be shameless, so this just lets us practice that. We've serenaded couples, danced for them, offered to take their pictures...

BELLA: On that note, no one wants to see your profile picture changed to you kissing someone either.

DREW: Even if you're both really attractive.

BELLA: Now, I don't have a boyfriend right now.

DREW: *(Suggestively.)* Oh yeah?

BELLA: Shut up. But when I do, you won't catch me doing that.

DREW: Me either. Even if she's gorgeous.

ALL: I will not be that guy!

ANA and BRANDON enter as CALEB, DREW, CHELSEA and BELLA exit.

BRANDON: Social media can be so much fun, can't it? Ana and I aren't all that tight, but I follow her and so do a lot of other people. On August 11 Ana posted...

ANA: (*Very happily.*) I have the best boyfriend in the world! So happy to be with you Garrett! #awesome boyfriend

BRANDON: And on August 15...

ANA: (*Still happy.*) Happy one month to @Garrettdabombdiggity you make me smile all the time. #anniversary

BRANDON: But then, the mysterious post of August 18...

ANA: (*Concerned.*) Why are men so hard to read?

BRANDON: Culminating in the celebrated post of August 20...

ANA: (*Upset.*) You will never find another woman like me. #dontneednoman

BRANDON: The next month was a litany of woe that ended in mid-September. On the 22nd Ana posted...

ANA: (*Happy.*) I never thought I could be so loved!

BRANDON: There were more, like the one from the 30th...

ANA: (*Happy.*) So loved, so happy, so perfect! I have the perfect man and his name is Sean! #dreamcouple

BRANDON: But happiness can't last forever and on October 11...

ANA: (*Sad.*) I guess I'm meant to be alone. #sad

BRANDON: But fear not! Because on November 23...

ANA: Happy Thanksgiving to the best boyfriend ever!

BRANDON: (*To audience.*) You all have a friend like this. Right now, you're thinking about them. I mean, how many times can a person be in love during high school? Personally, I don't think the average high school guy can even fall in love. I can't. How about you guys?

CALEB and DREW enter.

CALEB: Maybe.

BRANDON: But not yet?

CALEB: Nah. Not yet.

BRANDON: What about Shelby?

CALEB: She's 'aight.

BRANDON: (*To DREW.*) You?

DREW: No way. I can't even stay interested in the same girl long enough to get comfortable.

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