

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

By Krista Boehnert

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-754-2

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EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

A Ten Minute Dramatic Skit-Play

By Krista Boehnert

SYNOPSIS: In the aftermath of a school shooting, students attend a mandatory session with a grief counselor. Told by the characters through intersecting monologues, the horrors of the day are revealed as little by little the audience relives the terrifying moments with them. Rather than exploring the motivations of the shooter, *Emergency Protocol* focuses on the survivors. It shines a light on their healing process, and their resilience in the face of tragedy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 female, 1 male, 1 either; gender flexible)

CLAIRE (f) 15 years old (33 lines)
BEN (m)..... 15 years old (28 lines)
JANA (m/f) 15 years old (26 lines)
TAYLOR (f) 14 years old (26 lines)

SET: The set consists of 4 chairs, or wooden acting boxes, lined up across the stage, facing the audience.

PROPS

- Basketball
- Magazine
- School Bag
- School Binder

PRODUCTION NOTES

The play should not be performed as a static piece. There should be enough space between the chairs to allow the actors to get up and move around as they speak. Their lines should be delivered rapidly – not overlapping the other characters’ speech, or so fast that they are incomprehensible – but quickly so that each character’s lines also mirrors the fast-paced anxiety of reliving the situation. Most gun incidents at schools happen very fast – many less than the 10 minute running time of the play; the quick delivery of the lines mirrors this chaos.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Emergency Protocol was originally performed in 2007 at the Calgary High School Drama Festival. It was directed by Kara S. Boehnert. The original cast included:

CLAIRE	Khatidja Khan
BEN	Vikram Sran
JANA	Rachel Crossman
TAYLOR	Tisha Dupuis

Technical Crew: Jessica Chiasson, Aimsley Leece, Rajiv Rathore

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AT RISE: *The curtain opens with BEN sitting DSL on a chair. He is dressed in jeans and a basketball jersey. He holds a basketball in his hands. TAYLOR is seated next to him SL, she is wearing ripped jeans and a heavy metal band t-shirt. She has a school bag at her feet, propped against the chair leg. JANA sits SR, she is dressed in cargo pants and a t-shirt. She has a school binder with her, sitting in her lap. CLAIRE is sitting DSR and wearing workout pants, sneakers and a hoodie. They face the audience, addressing an invisible grief counsellor.*

CLAIRE: Is it just me, or is it really hot in here? Could we, like, do this outside or something?

BEN: I really need a drink. I'm not saying that 'cause I think you'll give me a drink or anything. I'm just sayin'.

JANA: Will this take long? I have stuff to do, but my teacher said everyone had to come talk to the grief counsellor, so here I am.

CLAIRE: Seriously, can't you open a window or something, your office is super small. How can you breathe?

TAYLOR looks forward, frowns, and crosses her arms across her chest.

JANA: I don't get it. I mean, what's with people? There's hundreds of places out there to choose from. What makes someone wake up one morning and say, "What will I do today....let's see...oh, yeah, I'm gonna go shoot up a school!"

BEN: I don't drink that often. What makes you think that?

TAYLOR opens her school bag, pulls out a magazine and starts flipping through it.

CLAIRE: No, small spaces don't usually bother me. Not really. Hardly ever. It's just... don't you like to know where the exits are when you're somewhere?

BEN: Come on, seriously? You don't have a mickey in your desk somewhere? You listen to people whine all day long about their problems and you do that sober?

TAYLOR: Yes, I'm ignoring you. I don't need to be here. What are you gonna do to make things better? But since you insist that I actually speak, what do you want me to talk about? (*Beat.*) I get to pick? Really? Well then I choose the alphabet.

JANA: Who cares where I was? I wasn't the person with the gun now was I?

TAYLOR: (*Singsong.*) A,b,c,d,e,f,g...

BEN: Yeah? Well I couldn't do that sober.

CLAIRE: I can't breathe!

TAYLOR: H,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p...

CLAIRE: Did you hear that? What was that sound?

BEN: I didn't come in here to talk about drinking. I was just joking around. Wow. You're pretty serious.

TAYLOR: Q,r,s,t,u,v...

BEN: You're not going to drop this, are you? OK, fine. I... see things, sometimes. Having a drink calms my nerves. It's not a big deal.

JANA: I was in the library when the announcement came over the intercom.

ALL: Attention!!

BEN: This is your principal speaking.

TAYLOR: We are going into lockdown.

JANA: Please invoke emergency protocols.

ALL: Repeat - invoke emergency protocols.

CLAIRE: Whatever that means.

BEN: No, I don't see things all the time. That would make me crazy. I'm not crazy.

TAYLOR: W,x,y, and z. Not bad, eh? I can even do it backwards. Z,y,x,w,v...

CLAIRE: What? You don't hear anything? My mistake.

JANA: I mean the freaking *library*. Everybody knows the last place you want to be in lockdown is the library. The crazy person *always* heads straight for the library.

TAYLOR: It's a gift. Not impressed, huh? Numbers then? I can do those too. One plus one is two. One plus two is three.

CLAIRE: I could see the door to the student parking lot. I mean I could see out the window. The sky. The trees. Then I heard the footsteps coming down the hall.

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BEN: What does it matter what I see? Who cares?

JANA: And there's, like, three different doors into the library. Three doors in, but no way to escape.

CLAIRE: I heard the footsteps and I froze. I *froze!* I would've had time to make it out the door. But I froze. I couldn't move.

BEN: It's not just what I see, there's sounds and smells too. Makes sleeping hard. That ever happen to you?

TAYLOR: One plus three is... What? I thought the deal was we all had to talk to you, but we could use our time any way we want. You can't make me talk about what happened. If you don't like *my* topics, I'll go back to my magazine. (*She picks up her magazine from her lap and starts reading it.*)

CLAIRE: I'm on the track team, you know? The relay team. I can run fast. If my feet would have moved, I would've been out that door and halfway to the gas station on the corner before those footsteps even rounded the corner.

TAYLOR: What do you care? Aren't you glad to get a half hour break from hearing everyone's version of events? Consider our session an extended lunch break.

JANA: I think we were locked in there for three hours before it was all over. It felt like a hundred years. Like time stopped or something.

BEN: What? Yeah, I was busted last week by the metal detector for carrying a pocket knife. I don't see what that has to do with anything...

CLAIRE: But my feet didn't move. Not one step.

JANA and CLAIRE: Have you ever felt frozen?

CLAIRE: Like paralyzed in place?

JANA: And you can't move, because there's no safe place to go?

TAYLOR: I really wish you'd stop asking me to open up about my feelings. I don't have to talk to you. Why don't you just leave me alone?

BEN: I carry the knife sometimes because it reminds me of my dad. It's not a weapon or anything.

TAYLOR: (*Flipping through her magazine.*) I'm sorry. I can't hear you. I'm actively ignoring you.

CLAIRE: If I could've just got my feet moving.

JANA: A bunch of us huddled in the librarian's office. It was easier to see all the doors from there.

BEN: I forgot to take it out of my pocket on the Monday. I had it there on the weekend, and I forgot to take it out before school. That's all.

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