

Drugs Are Bad

by Jonathan Rand

— Revisions rundown —

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This play has been rewritten since publication, so if you've got a book, it's an old version of the play. The latest edits are in this document. See below for various sections of replacement dialogue.

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MOM. A few hours ago, I was looking for something in your room, and... Harold?

DAD. (*Pointing at something on the coffee table:*) Son, what's this...?

BRAD. Oh no.

DAD. Son?

BRAD. I don't wanna talk about it.

...

DAD. *What is it?*

(*Pause.*)

BRAD. An Algebra book...

...

MOM. Where were you today, Bradley?

BRAD. What?

MOM. I want to know where you were. You promised me you'd go somewhere and loiter.

(*Beat.*)

BRAD. I went to school.

DAD. School?! *School!?!?* What, you've suddenly got a *problem* sneaking off to the mall and wasting your allowance on violent video games?!

...

BRAD. Dad, please.

DAD. (*Pulls out a CD:*) What is this? *Simon and Garfunkel?*

MOM. Simon and *who?*

BRAD. (*Embarrassed:*) They sing intelligent and wholesome lyrics.

DAD. You have got to be kidding me.

BRAD. Please. This is hard enough as it is.

DAD. (*Pulling out a magazine:*) And what is *this?*

BRAD. Dad, stop.

MOM. Let me see that. *Molecular Systematics?* Is this what I *think* it is?

BRAD. It's a scientific journal...

DAD. A scientific journal! What about *Playboy*?

BRAD. Please...

MOM. We paid good money for that subscription.

BRAD. I cancelled it.

MOM. You did *what*?! Why?!

BRAD. Please don't make me say it.

DAD. Say it.

(Beat.)

BRAD. I only read the articles.

MOM. But the graphic nudity!!

...

BRAD. It's not what you think.

DAD. Oh, it's exactly what I think. (To MOM:) *This...is milk.*

MOM. (Trying to pronounce:) "Milk"?

DAD. That's right. Street name "Bovine Teat Candy." It gives all the junkies their fix of *vitamins* and *minerals*.

MOM. Bradley, do you want strong bones and teeth?! Is that what you want?!

BRAD. (Suddenly blowing up:) Maybe that *is* what I want!! Okay? Maybe I *like* it.

DAD. Don't you dare...

BRAD. No! You listen to me for once! This isn't the first time I've had milk, all right? I've also experimented with...*fat-free*.

MOM. No...

BRAD. Yes! And you know why? It makes me feel good!

DAD. No son of mine is health-conscious. No son of mine.

...

Listen. I'm sorry for disappointing you. But this is how I *live*. Okay? This is what I *do*. This is *who I am*. I don't *like* it when you sneak malt liquor into my room every night. I don't *like* breaking curfew like you insist I do. I don't *like* binge-eating junk food and watching Austrian porn.

DAD. You don't?

BRAD. No.

MOM. Not even a *little*?

BRAD. No.

DAD. What about Grandma's Christmas weed?

...

DAD. Why, son? Why is it so hard? You don't see your mother and I running off to the "library" or "eating food with nutritional value."

BRAD. It's just... It's a different generation. I mean, everyone else is doing it. Like, the other day, when I was buying groceries for the family —

MOM. (Pure disgust:) UGH.

BRAD. I'm in the checkout line, and I see Greg and Tracy — even Bobby Sanders! — all bagging groceries. All working really hard to support their families. I just wanted to do something like that, too. I couldn't help it.

MOM. If Bobby Sanders helped an old lady cross the street, would you do it, too?

BRAD. Maybe.

MOM. This is disgusting.

DAD. Son, the bottom line is that your behavior is unacceptable.

...

BRAD. Oh, he hasn't told you? Dad here used to earn merit badges...for *merit*.

MOM. Don't you dare spout lies about your father, Bradley.

BRAD. Y'see, Dad doesn't know what happened last week when he had me go up the attic to get his home-tattoo kit. Found an old box of things from the old days. Some pretty eye-opening stuff in there, Dad, including your old Scout vest.

MOM. That's not true.

(*Beat.*)

DAD. (*With quiet intensity:*) You shouldn't have opened that box.

MOM. Excuse me?

DAD. That was private.

MOM. I don't believe this...

DAD. It was a rough time in my life.

MOM. A Boy Scout?! You mean to tell me you did community service? Voluntarily?!

DAD. I was eight years old, Delores. I wasn't thinking. You know what it was like—it was the *seventies*.

MOM. Great. So now what? Our son will think, "Well, my dad used to be respectful of his fellow man; maybe it's time to join the *Peace Corps*."

DAD. Delores...

MOM. You're becoming one terrific role model for our son.

DAD. We all make mistakes. These things happen.

MOM. Not to everyone.

DAD. Oh yeah? Miss Soup Kitchen Volunteer?

(*Silence.*)

MOM. We agreed to forget about that.

BRAD. Mom...?

DAD. I'm sorry.

BRAD. You helped the homeless?

MOM. (*To DAD:*) You swore you'd never tell anyone.

...

BRAD. I can't believe you two are all down on your low-horse. Look at you two. You're just as guilty as I am now—no—*worse*. And here you're trying to tell me how to live my life. How about stepping back and remembering that it's *hard* being a teenager.

DAD. Son, now listen—I can see how you would be confused. But your mother and I need you to *learn* from our mistakes. When I found your mother in that soup kitchen, I knew it was my duty to save her from that despicable place, and bring her to the lifestyle where she and I both belong: producing, directing, and starring in adult films.

MOM. He's right. You just can't be the kind of person who follows the rules and helps those in need. While that lifestyle may be "trending," it's just not right. Don't forget that there's sex *and* drugs *AND* rock & roll. All three. Yours for the taking, if you'll just reach for it, Bradley. *Reach* for it.

...

BRAD. You just don't get it, do you? This is how I choose to live! Okay?! If I want to eat healthy, pass high school, and abstain from sexual intercourse, then I sure-as-sugar will!

DAD. You watch your language, son.

BRAD. Then I sure as *hell* will!

DAD. Thank you.

BRAD. Oh—and you know what you missed during your frisk?

(BRAD pulls some papers out of his bag.)

A scholarship. Full-ride to Princeton. That's right—I'm quitting my rebellious punk band, and I'm going to college.

MOM. Absolutely not! I *forbid* you to succeed!

BRAD. It's too late, Mom. You two can't stop me. This is my life, and I'm going to live it. And if I decide to pursue a degree in pediatric medicine, then that's the way it goes. Goodbye!

(BRAD starts to storm out. Then he turns.)

And I'm taking Susan with me!

(He's gone. If there's a door, he slams it.)

MOM. Susan?! That prude wears turtlenecks! She leaves everything to the imagination!

DAD. Honey, please. It's over. He's gone.

MOM. I guess you're right.

DAD. Our son. Going to an Ivy League college.

MOM. Dear Lord...

DAD. Dating a wholesome young woman.

MOM. I know...

(Silence.)

We're the greatest parents that ever lived.