

Cast of Characters

THE TEACHER, Mr. (or Mrs.) Karsh

ADAM

SARAH

MARK

CHELSEA

TYLER BARNETT

LIZ

PHIL

THE GRADE NINE STUDENT

Production Notes

Volumetric Lighting: There are several ways to achieve this effect. Here is an easy and reasonably cheap one. Find a humidifier that operates with a vibrating plate. Place mineral oil in the chamber and leave the humidifier on in the space for at least an hour before the show. The mineral oil particles will fill the air and give the light volume. Be aware that this process may not be good for the humidifier!

The Lighter: A Zippo works well. However, performers should be careful that it does not grow too hot.

Lockdown: Most schools now have official lockdown procedures. Those featured in this play are, with minor changes, real.

A Note on Language

It is important to the play that students speak in a natural and realistic way. However, if some of the language is unsuitable for your venue, the author grants permission to change or omit offensive words. You are also encouraged to update slang expressions.

Acknowledgments

Lockdown was first performed by Click 2 Exit Productions in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, in October, 2006, with the following cast and staff:

MRS. KARSH.....	Julisa Stuart
ALEX.....	Spencer Hill
SARAH	Alexandra Haddad
MARK	Peter Molson
CHELSEA.....	Hilary Eatock
TYLER.....	Bill Whyte
LIZ	Janet Duhig
PHIL	Alex Frederick
GRADE NINE GIRL	Natasha Pelley-Smith
Stage Manager	Chelsea Whitelaw
Lights	Justine Fraser
Sound	Charles Haslam

I am deeply indebted to the following talented performers for workshopping this play:

Corey Agnew
Katelyn Van Alostyne
Spencer Guerreiro
Ryan Hume
Stephanie Pearson
Alex Rodgers
Piers Walker

Special thanks for **Michelle Carlson**, whose determination and faith in this play motivated me through four drafts. Thanks to Austin for the Dutch and the Dutch-style support.

LOCKDOWN

by Douglas Craven

(Setting: A classroom in a suburban high school, Deerborne C. V. I. The scene is dark, but we can make out desks, student projects on the wall, and a board. The door is on stage left, on the back wall. It has a translucent window on which, reversed, is the number 125. The hall outside is illumined, and the light streams through the open window and makes a square on the floor. If possible and practical, a fine mist [see Production Notes] gives the light hazy volume.)

(Suddenly, in the right corner of the stage, someone flicks a lighter. An instant of light. Darkness. The lighter flicks again. Darkness. Finally, the lighter stays on, showing the owner, ADAM, and several STUDENTS huddled together on the floor.)

TEACHER. Adam, put it out.

ADAM. How long do we have to stay here?

TEACHER. I don't know. Put it out.

(Darkness again. The lights creep up throughout the following. The effect should be that the audience is becoming accustomed to the light. While the students should be visible, they should rarely be fully lit. The Teacher's face should be very difficult to see until just before he leaves the room.)

ADAM. This is bullshit.

TEACHER. Watch your language.

ADAM. Sorry.

TYLER. *(Laughing:)* We're going to die anyway.

CHELSEA. That's not funny.

TEACHER. Shhh.

TYLER. *(Smiling:)* No, I'm being totally serious. We're done.

TEACHER. Barnett, that's enough.

TYLER. What. It's true. There's like terrorists in the hall or something.

PHIL. It's just a drill.

ADAM. They don't do drills for stuff like this, dick.

TEACHER. Hey, what did I say? Be quiet.

ADAM. My bad.

LIZ. Why do we have to be so quiet?

TEACHER. It's just the procedure we're supposed to follow. To keep us all safe.

SARAH. From what?

TYLER. From terrorists.

TEACHER. Tyler. Once more and you get detentions.

TYLER. Ooh, detentions.

MARK. Hey, shut up.

TYLER. Why don't you shut up?

TEACHER. Tyler, *enough*. Mark. *(Pause.)* Shhh.

P.A. Your attention please. The school is still on lockdown. Teachers are instructed to follow the procedures on page 23 of the Staff Emergency Handbook. Again, the school is locked down until further notice.

TEACHER. There. You heard it.

ADAM. Heard what? That thing's so busted you can hardly ever hear it.

TEACHER. *Sh.*

(The TEACHER rises, though he keeps low. His face is in shadow.)

SARAH. Mr. Karsh, where are you going?

TEACHER. I just need to get something from my desk. It's okay, Sarah.

SARAH. Sorry.

TEACHER. Don't be sorry. Everybody's scared.

(He exits right.)

LIZ. "Mr. Karsh, where are you going?"

TYLER. Hurry back, sir. I need you to hold me.

MARK. You're an asshole, Barnett. Shut your face.

LIZ. You shut up, queer.

MARK. What'd you call me?

TYLER. Oh, I believe it was "queer." Queer.

MARK. Why don't you come here and say that?

LIZ. (*To TYLER:*) Come on. Sit down.

CHELSEA. Don't you guys know what's going on here?

ADAM. Well, let's see. I was sitting in Karsh's writing class, and next thing I know, he grabs some kid from the hall and makes us all sit in the corner.

PHIL. In the dark.

SARAH. It's a lockdown.

ADAM. I know what it is.

SARAH. It's serious. It means there's somebody out in the hall with a gun or something.

TYLER. Or terrorists.

ADAM. (*Sceptical:*) Terrorists.

SARAH. It could be.

(STUDENTS *mock her.*)

No, it really could be.

ADAM. Terrorist in Deerborne.

PHIL. It's just a drill. (*Waits for reaction.*) Mr. Harding told me in shop that the teachers have to practise this.

ADAM. Christ.

LIZ. Harding said that?

PHIL. Yeah. Like a fire drill.

ADAM. Harding has his head so far up his ass.

TYLER. He's stoned half the time.

CHELSEA. They wouldn't have a drill for something like this.

MARK. It's gotta be. It's gotta be a drill.

SARAH. What if it isn't? What if there's some guy out there with a gun?

(Long pause.)

TYLER. *(Breaking the tension:)* Ah, who farted?

(The STUDENTS react.)

LIZ. You pig!

CHELSEA. God.

ADAM. *(Seeing that KARSH is returning:)* Hey. Quiet.

TEACHER. Okay, everybody listen.

ADAM. I thought we were supposed to be quiet.

TEACHER. Adam. Come on, help me out here. These are the rules for a lockdown. Listen up. You're to stay on the floor, out of sight. Students are not to talk or make noise. We're not supposed to turn on the lights or leave the room until we get an all-clear call from the office.

MARK. How long do you think that will be?

TEACHER. I don't know, Mark. We just have to wait.

(He sits, far enough from the students for them to whisper without his hearing.)

ADAM. *(To TYLER:)* Wait for what?

TYLER. *(Sotto voce:)* For death.

(He mimes a pistol, aims it at MARK and at SARAH.)

MARK. That's it. You're...

TYLER. *(Unflappable:)* I'm what? Dead? "I'm so dead"?

MARK. Shut up, dickless.

SARAH. Stop it.

TYLER. Hey, Dolans, why don't you look after your girlfriend? She's just about shitting her pants.

PHIL. Guys.

SARAH. Please, Mark.

(They turn away from TYLER, LIZ, and ADAM.)

MARK. Sorry. It's just...he pisses me off so much.

SARAH. Just ignore him.

MARK. How? Walk away? *(Pause.)* Sorry.

(Pause.)

SARAH. He's right.

MARK. What do you mean?

SARAH. I'm scared.

MARK. Come here. You don't have to be.

SARAH. This isn't fair.

MARK. Phil. Your mom works at the school board, right?

PHIL. Yeah.

MARK. That's how you know it's a drill, right?

PHIL. She said the teachers had to practise it last P.D. Day.

MARK. Just the teachers?

SARAH. **They** had to practise it. How do you know this is a drill?

CHELSEA. What about today?

PHIL. Well, that was only a month ago. It'd be kind of a coincidence if this one were real.

SARAH. Did she **say** it was a drill?

PHIL. It is.

SARAH. Did she **say** it?

PHIL. No.

P.A. Your attention please. The school remains on lockdown. Teachers are instructed to follow the procedures on page 23 of the Staff Emergency Handbook. The school is locked down until further notice.

(The STUDENTS wait. Finally, LIZ pulls out her cell phone. Its LCD screen lights the dark square where the students huddle.)

TEACHER. Liz, put away the phone or I'll have to take it.

LIZ. I just want to call my dad.

TEACHER. I told you before, we can't make calls.

LIZ. Why not?

TEACHER. If people start showing up, they'll get in the way of the police.

(LIZ has been dialling while KARSH is talking.)

TEACHER. Liz.

ADAM. She just wants to call her dad.

LIZ. I just want to tell him I'm okay.

TEACHER. I'm not going to ask you again.

(LIZ slaps the lid shut and puts it away. She looks at TYLER, who makes the "Jack Off" gesture.)

It won't be much longer. Everybody sit tight.

(He moves off, as before.)

TYLER. "Sit tight?"

ADAM. What the hell was that?

TYLER. Never mind, just...sit tight.

ADAM. I'm tight.

TYLER. Yeah, unlike Liz, I hear. Right Liz?

LIZ. *(Still smiling:)* Bitch.

(Noticing a GRADE NINE STUDENT huddling near him.)

TYLER. Hey, who's this kid?

ADAM. Some Grade 9. She was in the hall. She's the one Karsh pulled in.

TYLER. Hey, what's your name? Hey. Hel-looooo?

MARK. We should go.

PHIL. We can't.

MARK. Why not? Who's going to help us? We've got to help ourselves.

PHIL. We have to stay here.

MARK. Why?

PHIL. It's the procedure.

LIZ. Procedure?

PHIL. It's designed to keep us safe.

TYLER. (*Mocking:*) Oh. "The procedure."

LIZ. That doesn't keep you safe. Do you know why they even have a procedure? It's to cover their asses. So, remember last year some guy got shot at Pickridge High School? My boyfriend knows a guy who saw it. He said this older guy comes in looking for somebody. Then he sees him and he pulls this gat and shoots him once in the head and once in the stomach. One minute it's normal lunch time and then the next there's a dead guy in the front hall, right in front of the office.

SARAH. (*Making fun of her, to MARK:*) "Pulls this gat."

LIZ. Problem?

SARAH. What? I wasn't even talking to you.

LIZ. Just shut up.

SARAH. (*Quietly:*) Or what, you'll pull your gat?

PHIL. Did they catch the guy?

LIZ. He didn't even run. He just put away his gun and walks out the door.

TYLER. Come on. That's never going to happen. Somebody would have stopped him.

MARK. Who, you?

TYLER. Yeah, I would.

ALL. *(Laugh and respond. "Yeah, right.")*

TYLER. No seriously. What makes you think I wouldn't?

MARK. You even have to ask that?

TYLER. *(Serious:)* You don't even know what I'd do. If some guy came in here with a gun, I'd stand up and kick his ass.

ALL. *(More laughter.)*

TYLER. *(Hurt.)* I would. I'd try to stop him.

MARK. Why. Some kind of tough...

TYLER. It's the right thing to do.

ADAM. *(Kindly:)* Since when do you do the right thing? I mean, we get along and everything, but I can't see you...

TYLER. Fine, whatever.

LIZ. You okay?

TYLER. Fuck it.

(Short pause. ADAM flicks his lighter. We become aware of sobbing.)

MARK. Who's that?

TYLER. It's this Grade Nine kid. Hey, sir.

TEACHER. Tyler!

ADAM. Don't you think you should do something about this?

(KARSH moves over to the GRADE NINE STUDENT. We see his face clearly for the first time.)

TEACHER. Are you all right? I'm Mr. Karsh. Are you in Grade Nine? I know you must be scared. I'm scared too. Don't worry. This is going to be over soon. What's your name?

(The GRADE NINE STUDENT does not acknowledge him, but continues to sob. He tries to comfort her, but there is a limit to how much he can offer: a teacher to a student.)

TEACHER. Can you tell me your name? It's okay.

(She sobs. He tries to comfort her. Finally, SARAH moves over.)

SARAH. Sir, let me.

(KARSH moves away. CHELSEA and SARAH sit down beside the GRADE NINE STUDENT and comforts her.)

TYLER. I love it when the ladies touch each other.

TEACHER. That's it. Come over here.

TYLER. I thought we were supposed to stay down, you know, in case somebody blows anthrax under the door or something...

TEACHER. Come here.

(TYLER shuffles over.)

TYLER. What?

TEACHER. You need to ask me that? You know, I've put up with your crap...

TYLER. My "crap."

TEACHER. ...all year, but you just don't get it. This is an emergency, and you continue to make filthy jokes and act like a jackass.

TYLER. Oh, I'm a "jackass."

TEACHER. Yes, you are. That kid's scared to death. Everybody's scared. Now, I need you to sit down and shut your mouth. Can you do that, Tyler?

TYLER. Gee. I'm not sure.

TEACHER. God, you don't get it, do you?

TYLER. No, I guess I just don't.

TEACHER. Why don't you grow up? Sit the hell down. Now.

(TYLER does, with bravado. However, he seems a bit shaken.)

ADAM. What'd he say?

TYLER. Nothing.

(He stares grimly off.)

PHIL. I hope this lasts for another hour.

MARK. Why?

PHIL. We've got a Math test and I didn't study for it.

(They both laugh.)

P.A. Your attention please. This is Mr. Morris. The school remains on lock down. All teacher are to...

(The STUDENTS wait. Suddenly, the fire alarm goes off. The STUDENTS react: a hysterical babble, out of which we hear:)

TEACHER. Everybody sit down.

ADAM. That's the fire alarm.

TEACHER. I know. Now, sit down.

LIZ. And burn to death.

PHIL. We should go, sir.

TEACHER. It's not a real fire. Somebody pulled it.

MARK. Why would they do that?

TEACHER. I don't know. Sit down, all of you. Sit down, Adam.

ADAM. We should go.

TEACHER. Somebody pulled it.

SARAH. Who?

TEACHER. Adam!

SARAH. *(Almost hysterically now:)* Who?

(The alarm continues to ring. We become aware of the GRADE NINE STUDENT who is crying loudly.)

ADAM. Christ.

CHELSEA. It's okay. Quiet. Quiet.

TYLER. Shut her up.

TEACHER. Adam, sit down.

ADAM. Fuck that. You heard what just happened.

TEACHER. Sit down!

(ADAM and MR. KARSH stand toe to toe, although only Adam's face is visible.)

TEACHER. Adam. Listen to me. I need you to sit down. Please.

(ADAM seems to pause, then pushes past the TEACHER and runs for the door. MR. KARSH follows him, holding his shoulders. PHIL, MARK, and LIZ follow. ADAM whirls around and pushes MR. KARSH, who falls back. The STUDENTS react, pulling ADAM away. In the confusion, the GRADE NINE GIRL panics and runs out.)

TEACHER. Quiet. Who ran? *Who ran?*

SARAH. That girl from Grade Nine.

TEACHER. I want you all to stay here.

(They protest.)

Stay down. Keep quiet.

SARAH. Mr. Karsh!

(But MR. KARSH has opened the door and left. The fire alarm continues for a moment and then stops all at once. The silence absorbs the audience. Then:)

P.A. Attention, please. This is Mr. Morris. Staff and students should be aware that there is no fire in the building. The school is still on lockdown. Staff are reminded that no-one is to leave the building until the all-clear signal is given. The school remains locked down.

SARAH. Oh God.

MARK. It's okay.

SARAH. He left us.

ADAM. Shut up.

SARAH, *(Almost hysterical:)* He left.

PHIL. It's okay. Everybody stay calm.

CHELSEA. Oh, God.

LIZ. It's...

CHELSEA. What do we do?

ADAM. We get out of here.

MARK. Sit down.

ADAM. Out of my way.

MARK. I said sit down.

ADAM. Move or I'll fucking kill you.

LIZ. It's not safe. Please. Sit down.

PHIL. Adam, sit down.

ADAM. I—

MARK. Go ahead. You want to leave, go ahead.

(ADAM sits, smouldering but subdued. The STUDENTS sit, waiting alone.)

PHIL. We should call the police.

(LIZ takes out her phone. She tries to dial, but she's shaking too much.)

CHELSEA. Let me. *(She takes the phone.)* Hello? I'm a students at Deerborne C. V. I. Chelsea Mahorn. We're inside. Our teacher's not here. Somebody ran and he followed her. *(She listens.)* I will, but we need help. Can you just tell us what's going on? Fine. Yes. *(She closes the phone.)*

MARK. What did they say?

CHELSEA. They wouldn't tell me what's happening. They just said we'd be okay. The police are outside. We need to wait. Just...wait.

(The STUDENTS wait. PHIL picks up the discarded Emergency Handbook and leafs through it. ADAM takes out his lighter and begins to flick it.)

MARK. Put that out.

ADAM. Nobody could see it from the window.

MARK. I said, put it out.

TYLER. Hey, shut up. Who died and made you boss?

PHIL. (*Reading the manual.*) I can't believe this thing. What to do in case of a gas leak. Intruder in the school. Hey, want to hear the code they use for a bomb threat?

MARK. What?

SARAH. What is that?

PHIL. The Staff Emergency Handbook. Listen to this, "In the event of a lockdown, do not answer the doors. Do not respond to the fire alarm because...

SARAH. What?

PHIL. ...because the intruder may wish to lure students into the hallways that way."

CHELSEA. (*Horried:*) Who would do that? Who could think like that?

(SARAH begins to cry. MARK comforts her. The STUDENTS deal with their panic in different ways.)

(The lighter now becomes the main device for shifting focus from one group of students to another, and for marking the passage of time. There are, generally, three flicks between each scene. On each flick, the lights shift, favouring different students. These STUDENTS might change position in the blackouts to indicate that time is passing.)

MARK. How long it is now?

LIZ. (*Checking her phone:*) More than an hour.

ADAM. Where the hell is Karsh?

TYLER. Probably booked it. Hey, that's what I'd do.

MARK. Then why don't you?

TYLER. Because I'm in love with you.

MARK. Fat piece of shit.

SARAH. Mark!

TYLER. Any time, buddy.

LIZ. (*To TYLER:*) Shut up.

(We hear the sound of footsteps in the hall. They are not particularly threatening, but they are unexpected, and resound in the empty hallway. A suggestion of a shadow passes by the door. It is very important that this figure not have an obvious gun. It might be an official, or a policeman, or a killer. It passes by fairly quickly.)

(The STUDENTS sit, huddling together in the dark.)

ADAM. I hate this.

MARK. Quiet.

ADAM. That could have been anybody. It could have been a cop.

PHIL. Or Mr. Karsh.

CHELSEA. He'd come back to us.

TYLER. Right. He got out. So should we.

LIZ. That's stupid.

TYLER. You're stupid.

LIZ. You're such a child.

ADAM. He's right. It's stupid to stay here, sitting on the ground, huddling together like...

LIZ. He might have a gun.

ADAM. ...like animals. So, he's got a gun. Is it better to wait for him here like...a deer in the headlights? Sit in the dark, pissing our pants until somebody shoots us. That's stupid.

LIZ. We're safe.

ADAM. Stupid.

P.A. Your attention please. The school remains on lockdown. Teachers are instructed to follow the procedures on page 23 of the Staff Emergency Handbook. The school continues to be locked down until further notice.

(ADAM plays with his lighter without flicking it. It catches MARK'S attention.)

MARK. Hey, let me see your lighter.

(ADAM tosses it over.)

MARK. Nice. Where'd you get it?

ADAM. My grandfather. When I visited Holland last summer.

MARK. What's the crest?

ADAM. Family coat of arms.

MARK. *(Tries to read the inscription in mangled Dutch:)* Kracked gut nar de Jagger.

ADAM. That's *Kragt gaat naar de Jager.*

MARK. What's it mean?

ADAM. "You have to be strong to win." Something like that. Guess I should have paid more attention when he told me.

MARK. Can I try it?

ADAM. Go ahead.

(MARK flicks the lighter. Again, we have a sense of time passing. The focus is now on Mark's "group.")

CHELSEA. How long is it now?

PHIL. An hour, twenty six minutes.

SARAH. *(Sitting with MARK and PHIL:)* Do you believe in God?

MARK. Sure.

PHIL. No. I'm an agnostic. Maybe.

(CHELSEA laughs. The rest are oblivious to the joke.)

PHIL. You see, being an agnostic means you're not sure if...

TYLER. *(From out of the darkness:)* We get it.

MARK. How about you?

SARAH. Yeah.

MARK. What church?

SARAH. I don't go to church.

PHIL. You know what I don't understand. It's when people say you should fear God. I mean, if God is love, why should people fear Him.

MARK. It means respect.

SARAH. It's an old way of saying it. Like "suffer." Jesus says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." When I was little, I ask my dad, "Why does Jesus want children to suffer?"

PHIL. Well...why does he?

TYLER. Toss it over here.

(MARK looks at ADAM, who shrugs. MARK throws him the lighter. TYLER flicks it and the light shifts as before. The focus is now on his group.)

LIZ. God, what's taking so long?

(She takes out her cell.)

Come on. Pick up. Damn it. *(She dials another number.)* Sinead. It's me. Are you okay? Where are you? Do you know what's going on? Our fucking teacher booked it. Karsh. Serious. Yeah, we are. I feel like I'm going to throw up. Who's your teacher? Put her on, okay? Mrs. Heller, do you know what's going on? Our teacher left. He ran after a girl, but he didn't come back. Do you know if he got out? Everybody's okay, but... Is there somebody in the hall? No. I know. We will. *(To the group:)* Nobody knows anything.

(TYLER sings a parody of a popular tune. You are encouraged to write your own lyrics, as long as they focus on the word "Columbine." Alternately, you can choose a song about the Columbine shootings, or a song involving violent killing. If neither of these options appeals to you, he can improvise a tune to the following lyrics:)

TYLER.

I go to Deerborne C. V. I.
It's **Canada's*** own Columbine
I'm sitting locked down in my class
A psycho wants to shoot my ass...

*(*Replace "Canada" with your state or city name, if desired.)*

(ADAM snatches his lighter away on his way to sit between the two groups.)

ADAM. Man, don't you ever shut up?

LIZ. *(To phone:)* Jesus, dad!

TYLER. What's your problem?

LIZ. Goddamn answering machine.

TYLER. Why would God damn an answering machine?

ADAM. Why would he damn anything?

TYLER. Easy. He doesn't, cuz there isn't a God.

LIZ. Yes, there is.

TYLER. You know who's God? Whoever's out in that hall, that's God.

LIZ. *(To the answering machine:)* Dad. It's me again. We're still at the school. Dad, are you there? Please pick up. I need you to come and get me. Please come to the school. Daddy?

CHELSEA. *(To ADAM:)* Mind if I...?

(ADAM hands over the lighter, perhaps rolling his eyes. CHELSEA flicks it. Time passes as before. Lights up on all students.)

CHELSEA. You know what I heard. If you feed a bird rice, he'll explode.

MARK. Get out.

SARAH. No, I heard that.

PHIL. I heard it too.

TYLER. That would be awesome.

MARK. There's no way a bird would explode from just rice. Think about it. In the city, there's a lot a pigeons, right? Well, in Chinatown, there's a lot of rice. So, if you're right, there should be about six hundred explosions downtown every lunch hour.

PHIL. Maybe she doesn't mean "explode" in the traditional sense of *(He makes a bird explosion sound. They laugh.)* Like a pigeon actually you know *(He adds mime to his bird explosion to illustrate. They laugh again.)* Maybe it just explodes in their stomachs and damages them internally *(And that kills the laughter.)*

ADAM. Man, you take all the fun out of exploding pigeons, you know that?

LIZ. Life is so random.

TYLER. I know it.

LIZ. Here we are...here. Now. Talking about exploding birds.

ADAM. What else you want to talk about? Something less random. Something more like...where the fuck is Karsh?

MARK. You ever see that movie where a bird is flying by and it gets hit by a baseball.

ALL. *(Respond.)*

MARK. It's just flying by and it explodes.

LIZ. That's terrible.

TYLER. It's hilarious!

LIZ. Yeah. If you're not the bird.

SARAH. It's just a bird.

LIZ. Did I ask you for your opinion?

SARAH. What's your problem?

LIZ. You are.

PHIL. Guys...

LIZ. If you can't buy it at a mall, you don't care about it.

SARAH. Like you do? You're big on world issues...save the birds...

LIZ. At least I care about shit like that.

SARAH. Oh yeah, you care.

LIZ. Fuck you. I'm so sick of your shit. Little pretty princess.

SARAH. You just...

LIZ. Why don't you just leave? Nobody'd give a shit. Better you than us.

(Long pause.)

SARAH. Really?

MARK. Sarah, sit down.

SARAH. At least I don't need to run to my daddy, all scared. "Daddy, daddy, please help me." But your dad's not answering, is he? Maybe you should call your mom.

MARK. Sarah...

(She ignores him.)

SARAH. Oh, I forgot. That dumb slut left you, didn't she?

(LIZ launches herself at SARAH. The GROUP rushes to separate them. It is chaos.)

PHIL. Quiet. Stop it. You're going to get us all killed. Now sit down, both of you. Sit down.

(LIZ moves away. SARAH sits.)

(Sarah grabs the lighter and moves near Chelsea. She begins flicking the lighter.)

CHELSEA. You okay?

SARAH. I'm fine.

CHELSEA. Don't let her get to you. She's like that to everybody.

SARAH. Thanks.

CHELSEA. Can I ask you something?

SARAH. Sure?

CHELSEA. Why are you mad at me?

SARAH. I'm not.

CHELSEA. Really? Good.

(They sit there quietly.)

CHELSEA. It's just... I'll say "Hi" in the hall and you just walk right by.

SARAH. I've been really busy, you know. I've had a lot on my mind.

CHELSEA. You and Mark?

SARAH. No.

CHELSEA. Then what's...

SARAH. Look, I don't really want to talk about it right now, okay?

CHELSEA. You are mad at me.

SARAH. Yes. Okay. I'm mad at you.

CHELSEA. Why?

SARAH. Don't worry about it...

CHELSEA. But if you don't tell me now, we might never...

SARAH. Don't say it. Just shut up, okay?

CHELSEA. But...

P.A. Your attention please. The school is still on lockdown. Teachers are instructed to follow the procedures on...

(There is a muffled sound. It is important that there be NO EVIDENCE AT ALL that any harm has come to the office staff. The audience must be left in the dark as to what happened to the P.A. It might simply have given out; it might not have. There are some mysterious sounds [the microphone being dropped?] and then a squelch. The P.A. goes dead. All the STUDENTS improvise panicked reactions.)

PHIL. Quiet. Stop it. It could just have busted. Listen! It's been breaking down all year. It might just be broken.

MARK. What if it didn't?

SARAH. *(Panicking:)* He could have shot them. He could have shot them!

(CHELSEA moves to comfort her.)

PHIL. The system's been breaking down all year. Use your heads. Quiet. *(To SARAH:)* Quiet! Now, we've got to keep calm. Nothing's changed. We have to sit here where it's safe until somebody comes to get us.

TYLER. What if we decide not to?

MARK. Yeah.

PHIL. Mark, no. It's not... Listen. We have to stay here. If we run, we'll just be like scared animals. If there is anybody out there, he'll mow us down without even trying.

MARK. We can't just sit around.

LIZ. I've got to get out of here.

(She almost makes it to the door. TYLER stops her.)

TYLER. No. Sit down. Liz. It's going to be okay. Come on. Sit down.

(He sits down beside her, his arm around her.)

SARAH. We're going to die here, aren't we?

MARK. No.

SARAH. Mark.

MARK. We'll be fine.

(The STUDENTS are now huddled closely together.)

ADAM. We're hunted. *(Breaking down:)* Fucking hunted. Jesus, we're kids. When did people start hunting kids?

TYLER. Take it easy. If anybody comes in here, I'm going to bash his head in with the fire extinguisher. Okay? Okay?

ADAM. Bomb threat. Intruder in the school. Little kids taken from their room. And us too. We fucking hunt each other.

MARK. We're like...an endangered species.

SARAH. It's not fair.

LIZ. *(Back on the phone:)* Daddy? Are you home? Please come and get me.

(Suddenly, we hear the steps again. The shadow moves across the window. This time it is more menacing, but, again, it might be a police officer. It might be:)

SARAH. Mr. Karsh.

PHIL. Shh.

LIZ. Daddy...

PHIL. We don't know that. Stay down.

LIZ. Please come to the school.

MARK. Liz, quiet.

(The STUDENTS huddle together. The shadow pauses in front of the door. TYLER reaches over, and almost with tenderness, closes the lid of Liz's phone. There is a knock at the door. The STUDENTS try to quiet themselves, comfort each other. The shadow tries the door knob. Then it moves off.)

SARAH. What should we do?

MARK. Stay down.

ADAM. It's the police.

CHELSEA. We don't know that.

LIZ. Open the door.

PHIL. Wait. We don't know who it is.

TYLER. I think he's gone.

SARAH. What if the lockdown is over? What if we can go?

PHIL. They'd tell us.

ADAM. What if they can't?

(He stands up and places his hand on the doorknob. Suddenly, the hall light flicks off. SARAH cries out. The others react. We hear foot-steps approaching, more slowly this time. We see the STUDENTS huddling together. Hunted. Stage lights begin to fade.)

SARAH. It could be anybody out there.

(There is a knock at the door. ADAM moves away. The remaining light favours SARAH.)

SARAH. It could be anybody.

(Black out.)

End of Play