

**COITUS INTERRUPTUS**

A ten-minute play

by Sterling Arthur Leva

Dramatis Personae

MICKEY: Mid-twenties.

MOM: MICKEY's mother, who is only heard from offstage.

GLORIA: MICKEY's probation officer, mid-forties.

COP 1: Standard issue police officer.

COP 2: Another standard issue police officer.

Place

Southern California

Time

Present

ACT I  
Scene 1

Setting: A small bedroom. There is a twin bed, a dresser, and a writing desk with chair. There is a shoebox on the desk and a pad of paper and pen. There is also a telephone and a bookcase with books on them.

At Rise: MICKEY is sitting at the desk. He is holding a piece of paper and reading from it.

MICKEY (reading)

“When I grow up, I want to be a writer with a drinking problem.”

(Puts paper in shoebox.)

“Mickey Phineas Chesterfield, Grade 5.” Ha! Well kid, I’ll have you know that you’re gonna go on to nail everything except the writer part. Oh, and you’re gonna get detention for that answer of yours. Better get used to it...

(Scratches leg and lifts up his pants to reveal an ankle bracelet. It is the kind that law enforcement uses to monitor individuals on house arrest.)

MOM (from offstage)

Mickey! I’m baking cookies. Do you want any?

MICKEY (shouting)

No thanks, Mom! I’m in the middle of something.

(Picks up pen and begins writing.)

Might as well add that to the list: “Because I am a grown man who still lives with his mother.”

(Puts pen down.)

God bless her. Only woman who ever put up with my shit.

(Rifles through the shoebox and takes out another paper. He looks at it.)

This one, on the other hand, clearly wasn’t having it.

(Traces finger along paper and reads.)

“The only thing you are worse at than fucking is writing. If you had half a brain (which is doubtful considering the way you drink), you would do the world a favor and remove yourself from the gene pool. Signed, Katherine. P.S. Don’t write back, as I have already been subjected to enough of your shitty words. Besides, my new hairdresser boyfriend would not appreciate it much.”

(Crumples up paper and tosses it over his shoulder.)

And what did we learn at school *today*, Mickey? Well, let’s see...

(Picks up pen and writes.)

“Because I fuck like I write.” And then, in parentheses, “sloppily.” “Because hairdressers command more professional and romantic respect than I do.” “Because I want to do the world a favor.”

(Puts pen down and stands up.)

Haha! Do the world a favor! The world never did *me* any fucking favors, did it? But who’s keeping score?

(Looks down at desk with writing pad on it.)

## MICKEY (Cont.)

I'm keeping score.

(The telephone starts ringing. MICKEY looks at it.)

And now for my *favorite* game: *Who Wants To Ruin Mickey's Fucking Day?!*

(Picks phone up and puts the receiver to his ear.)

Congratulations! You have passed my elaborate and *very* exclusive screening process! Now, with whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?

(Listens for a moment.)

Oh, it must be my lucky day! Yes, I was *hoping* you people would call!

(Listens.)

Yes, I have indeed been receiving your statements in the mail and I assure you I haven't been ignoring them. In fact, I've been placing them with all of my other important documents.

(Looks down at shoebox and listens.)

Uh huh... Uh huh... Well, no. I am not currently working.

(Listens.)

About that... I'm unable to locate employment at the current time.

(Listens.)

Thank you for your condolences, but to be honest, I couldn't tell you what the job market looks like.

(Listens.)

Is it that bad? Really? Is that why you're working at a call center? Haha just kidding!

(Listens.)

I just haven't been able to find many employment opportunities within the confines of my parents' house.

(Listens.)

I believe the technical term for it is "house arrest." Say, is there a special clause allowing loan deferment for alumni who find themselves convicted of misdemeanors, felonies, and various other legal infractions?

(Listens.)

There isn't? Hmmm. Well, you should really consider bringing that up with your superiors.

(Listens.)

Default? Now, let's not get ahead of ourselves here.

(Listens.)

Yes, I'm fully aware that I graduated five years ago.

(Listens.)

Yes, I'm fully aware that I haven't made a single payment.

(Listens.)

Yes, I'm fully aware of the total balance.

(Listens.)

Now that you mention it, I *may* have a way of paying the amount in full in the near future. I recently received an email from the crown prince of Togo (that's a country in Africa, not the sandwich chain) who said that he would transfer two million dollars (that's United States currency) into my bank account if I just gave him my social security number and banking information. Now, I don't have a bank account but I think I could get one. Although I forgot my social... say, do *you* happen to have it?

(Listens.)

MICKEY (Cont.)

I have no idea how much they pay you, but maybe you're right: maybe it *isn't* enough to deal with this shit... Hello?

(Hangs up phone.)

Damn, I didn't get a chance to tell him that all of my debts will shortly be wiped clean.

(Sits down and writes.)

"Because I am broke, over-educated, and unemployable."

(Puts pen down. Stands up, walks over to bed, and lies down on his back starting at the ceiling.)

You sad, sorry son of a bitch. Never could translate those dreams into practice, could you? You used to love daydreaming, remember? Lying on this bed, staring at the ceiling, writing stories in your head to pass the time.

(Sits up.)

What happened? One day, you're young, full of promise, your entire life ahead of you, the world as your oyster, etc. And then, suddenly...

(Walks over to table and takes papers out of shoebox and begins to read them.)

"Thank you for submitting your poetry. Unfortunately..."

(Crumples up paper and throws it behind him as he reads another.)

"Dear Mr. Chesterfield: We appreciate you sending us your short story, "Immaculate Failure." We regret to inform you..."

(Crumples up paper and throws it behind him. He reads another.)

Ah! The magnum opus! The *pièce de résistance*! "To Whom It May Concern... Professional etiquette dictates that we try to keep these correspondences as informal and delicate as possible. However, in your case, I will make a special exception." Ah yes, *finally* somebody realizes that I'm *exceptional*! "I have read your play, and I say with the firmest sincerity that it is the most offensive, ill-conceived, and downright atrocious affront to the theater that I have ever had the displeasure of reading. I sincerely urge you to seek professional help and to never endeavor to try your diseased hand at playwriting again."

(Looks at paper a moment before putting it back into the shoebox.)

You know, I kinda like this one.

(Sits down, picks up pen, and writes.)

"Because I can compose competently in neither prose nor poetry nor playwriting."

(Puts pen down. There is a knock on the door.)

MOM (from offstage)

Mickey! Come have some cookies before they get cold, honey.

MICKEY

God, Mom! I'm in the middle of something!

MOM

Ok, honey. Don't work too hard.

MICKEY

Haha! Don't work too hard, Mickey! You might strain yourself! Man, I have a lot of problems,

## MICKEY (Cont.)

but work ethic isn't one of them, is it? I mean, since we're being so honest and thorough today, let's admit it: if it didn't come in a bottle, a baggie, or a skirt, I couldn't be bothered.

(Stands up.)

But just to be sure, let's *really* look at this. So-- ten years as a writer and what do we have? A handful of poems, a couple short stories, an unfinished novel, and an ill-conceived play, all rejected by various publishers, editors, theater houses, contests, etc. So, to sum it up succinctly:

(Sits down, picks up pen, and writes.)

"Because I am a hack who can't hack it."

(Puts pen down and pulls more papers out of shoebox.)

Ah! Finally, some accomplishments!

(Reads.)

"Subsequent to making contact with Respondent, Officer Kramer formed the belief that Respondent was intoxicated after having observed the following objective symptoms of intoxication:"

(Crumples up paper and throws it behind him.)

Nice detective work there, Constable! Real fucking Sam Spade shit. You caught me on a slow night anyways.

(Reads from another paper.)

"Property Inventory Receipt: Lemon County Jail." Dated... January of 2011. That would make it my fifth arrest. Possession of heroin. "Property: Two dollars."

(Crumples up paper and throws it behind him.)

Two dollars! That's more than I have now.

(Looks at another paper.)

Ah, my favorite! "Narcotic Offender Registration Card: To be carried by convicted offender at all times." Whoops, maybe I should start doing that. Oh wait—I'm not allowed in public anyways!

(Crumples up paper and tosses it behind him. Picks up pen and writes.)

"Because I make a better criminal than artist, and even then I'm small-time." But even small-timers must:

(Reads paper.)

"Violate no terms of probation. Probationers must consume no drugs or alcohol and may not possess firearms of any kind."

(Crumples up paper and tosses it behind him.)

Which brings us to our current predicament. A handgun would come in awful handy, but they're hard to come by when one is a small-time convicted felon.

(Reaches into pocket and pulls out a pill bottle. He places it on the desk.)

These should do the trick just fine though. The cause of your woes *and* the cure for them! But don't worry, Mom-- they're doctor prescribed!

(Laughs then grows quiet. Picks up pen and writes.)

"I'm sorry, Mom."

(Puts pen down, picks up notepad, and reads it over.)

Well, Mickey, you did it: You finally wrote something that people are gonna read.

(Puts pad down and writes.)

Just the closing line then... Well, might as well make sure we're not missing anything.

(Puts pen down. Goes through shoebox and pulls something out.)

MICKEY (Cont.)

What the hell is this?

(Reads it.)

“To my dearest son. I knew from the moment I held you in my arms that you were special. I also knew that you would go on to do great things. Follow your dreams. Don’t ever stray from your calling, no matter how hard the going gets. Don’t let your love of what you do get lost amid silly things like money, success, and fame. Just keep going and live to fight another day! Love, Mom.”

(Puts paper down and grows furious.)

This isn’t supposed to be in here! This is bullshit!

(Calms down.)

Thanks for the plot twist, Mom.

(Looks at pill bottle.)

What the fuck am I doing? I can’t do this.

(Puts pill bottle back in pocket and stands up. Picks up writing pad and examines it.)

I *definitely* can’t do this: my fucking suicide note is in need of too many edits.

(Puts notepad on desk. There is a knock at the door.)

GLORIA (from offstage)

Probation check!

(Enter GLORIA, COP 1, and COP 2 stage right. COP 1 and COP 2 begin looking around his room as if they’re searching for contraband.)

MICKEY

Hi, Gloria.

GLORIA

I’m not interrupting anything, am I?

MICKEY

I was just trying to get some writing done.

GLORIA

(Pulls breathalyzer out of bag and puts it up to MICKEY’s mouth.)

You know the drill, Mickey. Blow.

(MICKEY blows into the breathalyzer. It beeps and GLORIA pulls it away and examines it.)

Perfect score.

(COP 1 is looking through the books on MICKEY’s shelves.)

COP 1

Have you actually read all these books, kid?

MICKEY

I have.

COP 1

Why?

MICKEY (puzzled)

I'm not really sure how to answer that question.

(GLORIA is looking at MICKEY's desk. She picks up the shoebox.)

GLORIA

What's all this?

MICKEY (nervous)

Those are kind of like research materials for something I'm working on.

(GLORIA picks up notepad.)

GLORIA

This, you mean?

MICKEY (nervous)

Yeah, but it's not really much of anything really, it's more just a creative exercise, you know—

GLORIA (looking over notepad)

You left it unfinished.

MICKEY

Yeah, it's not really—

GLORIA (reading)

“After much thought and consideration, and in light of the aforementioned reasons, I have made the decision to...”

(Looks at MICKEY.)

You've made the decision to what? There's a long list here and then that. So, you've made the decision to what?

MICKEY

To change my ways.

GLORIA

(Puts down notepad.)

I'm glad to hear that, Mickey. I've dealt with a lot of reprobates in my time but you—

(Points at MICKEY.)

You're too smart for all this.

MICKEY

You know, I think you're right.

GLORIA (to COPS)

All clear?

COP 2

Yeah, he's clean.

GLORIA

All right. I'll just search you and then we'll be on our way.

MICKEY (alarmed)

Search me?

GLORIA

I need to make sure you don't have anything you shouldn't. Put your arms out for me.  
(MICKEY puts his arms out and GLORIA pats him down. When she comes to his pocket, she feels inside and pulls out the pill bottle.)

MICKEY

I can explain that...

GLORIA (looking at bottle)

Oh, I bet you can.

MICKEY

No, seriously. I found those in my parent's medicine cabinet and I was going to flush them right when you got here. Honest!

GLORIA

(Looks at MICKEY.)

How old are you, Mickey?

MICKEY (confused)

Twenty-seven. Why?

GLORIA

(Holds up pill bottle.)

Why would a twenty-seven year-old need an entire bottle of Viagra?

MICKEY (surprised)

Viagra?

GLORIA

(Shakes bottle.)

GLORIA (Cont.)

Erectile dysfunction pills, Mickey.

MICKEY

I thought they were Vicodin... I really should wear my glasses more often. I mean, um, surely having sexual problems isn't grounds for a probation violation?

GLORIA

No, it's not. But having medication that doesn't belong to you is. I'm going to have to take you in, Mickey.

MICKEY

Shouldn't you be taking in my old man instead?

GLORIA

No, he's clearly got enough problems of his own. The officers will assist you.  
(COPS grab MICKEY by either arm.)

COP 1

Don't worry, kid. Your stuff will be waiting right where you left it when you get out.

COP 2

Yeah, you'll live to fight another day. Let's go.  
(GLORIA walks towards stage right with the COPS escorting MICKEY behind her.)

MICKEY (smiling)

Ah, what the hell? I need a change of scenery anyways. Gloria, can I just tell my mom where I'm going?

GLORIA

Make it quick, Mickey.

MICKEY (shouting)

Hey, Mom! I'm going out for a while! Save me some cookies for when I get back! I love you!  
(They exit stage right.)

CURTAIN