

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Joy

by Scott McAteer

EXTRACT

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Characters:

ALBIN: A sad person.

His MOTHER and FATHER: Who are happy.

A Voice on the Phone.

That Wondrous Oracle; Television.

MS. TEURETTE: Who likes a laugh.

3 PSYCHIATRISTS.

A DOOR-TO-DOOR-SALESMAN.

A Play for 3-5 Players.

ALBIN SITS IN A COMFORTABLE CHAIR IN THE MIDDLE OF A ROOM. HE SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE. HE DOESN'T RISE FROM THIS SEAT, THE ACTION AND THE SCENES MOVE AROUND HIM. HE LOOKS QUITE UNHAPPY. HE'S BEEN IN THE CHAIR FOR THREE YEARS AND IS SURROUNDED BY THE CONSEQUENTIAL RUBBISH.

ALBIN SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE.

ALBIN

(With Infinite Sadness.) Hello, I'm Albin.

MOTHER AND FATHER ENTER FROM OPPOSITE SIDES; THEY ARE A HAPPY, SUBURBAN COUPLE.

FATHER

(To MOTHER.) Time for the family photo. I've set the camera.

MOTHER

(To FATHER.) Goodie.

THEY POSE

MOTHER

(To the world in general.) The family photo is an important part of a loving domestic relationship.

FATHER

It records the happy times for us to look back on when we're old and no longer have control of our future.

MOTHER

Or our children...

FATHER

Or our bowels.

MOTHER

These are great days.

FATHER

Happy days.

MOTHER

Happy times.

FATHER

The summer of our content.

ALBIN

I value truth above happiness, and the truth is, *(To parents.)*
you smell bad.

FATHER

I think you'll find that's you.

ALBIN

Oh yes.

MOTHER SPRAYS AIR FRESHENER.

ALBIN

Family photos are so fake.

FATHER

Nonsense, they show our way of life.

MOTHER

Our human condition.

*MOTHER AND FATHER LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SMILE. THEY
LOOK AT ALBIN, THE LOOK AT THE MESS.*

MOTHER AND FATHER

We'd better clean up.

*MOTHER AND FATHER TIDY THE DEBRIS AROUND ALBIN. EVERY SO
OFTEN THEY FREEZE AND SAY "SMILE!". ALBIN SAYS "CLICK" AND
THEN THEY GO BACK TO CLEANING.*

MOTHER AND FATHER

Smile!

ALBIN

I'd like you to meet my family. Click.

FATHER

Howdy doody!

MOTHER WAVES AND TITTERS. THEY GO BACK TO TIDYING.

MOTHER AND FATHER

Smile!

ALBIN

Click. My family are brain dead...

FATHER

After the family photo we can all get a treat!

MOTHER AND FATHER

Smile!

ALBIN

I won't smile. Click.

MOTHER

(Ruffling his hair and primping him.) He looks just like his Grampa!

ALBIN

I can't smile.

FATHER

But his Grampa's been dead for the last 10 years.

MOTHER

(Prodding Albin) Yes, I keep telling him to eat more and get some sun.

MOTHER AND FATHER

Smile!

MOTHER AND FATHER PHYSICALLY PULL ALBIN'S MOUTH INTO A SMILE.

ALBIN

Click.

FATHER

Hey gang! Let's go for some tofu ice-cream!

MOTHER

Great idea!