



30 Seconds or Less

REALLY Short Skits for Drama Ministries

By John Coper

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About This Book

30 Seconds or Less is an experiment two years in the making. In the fall of 2005 I got to see a Second City show for the first time. It was a dream come true for a life long SNL/SCTV fan, considering the great legacy of comedic talent that has graced their stages, and it was educational for me as a comedy writer.

One of the aspects of the Second City format I enjoyed most is what they call the “Blackout Skit”. These scenes are usually no more than two or three lines long. Some don’t even have dialogue. It’s an excuse to make a quick joke and often a sharp point with the audience. They reminded me of Len Cella’s “Moron Movies”, a series of short films that aired on The Tonight Show in the early 80’s.

I began experimenting with this form of drama both on paper and on film. I employed this one joke format in some of Righteous Insanity’s short films, including “Adam and Eve” and “Desperate Housewives of the Bible.” Several of those scenes are included in this collection. Finally I had enough material to release this book, as an experiment, to see if we can’t push the boundaries of church drama a little further.

There are 31 scripts included in these pages. The last script, “Righteous Laugh-In”, is a series of quick jokes scripted in the “Cocktail Party” format used on the old *Laugh-In* show. It seemed appropriate to include it here.

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For more drama resources, scripts, and ideas visit my website at www.righteousinsanity.com

Prayer for Peace

By John Cospers

Roy is on his knees, praying.

ROY: God, please grant me peace, that no matter what may happen this day, I will know that you are still in charge.

Roy's cell phone rings.

ROY: Hello?

TED: Roy? Don't bother coming to work today. You're fired.

Roy stands up and yells:

ROY: ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME???

The First Lie

By John Cospers

Eve shows Adam an apple with a bite taken out of it.

EVE: It fell off the tree this way.

The Last Shall Be First... Part 1

By John Cosper

[Director's Note: This is a three part drama. Parts 2 and 3 appear later in this book. The scenes should be spaced out during the night in which they are used and done in order.]

ANNOUNCER- *(from off stage)* Jesus said that the last shall be first, and the first shall be last. To help you all understand what he meant, please welcome Tyler and Neil.

Tyler and Neil walk out on stage. They stop, don't say a word for a short pause.

TYLER- *(humble)* Go ahead, man.

NEIL- No, it's okay, you can go ahead.

TYLER- You go first.

NEIL- You go first.

TYLER- I insist, you first.

NEIL- No, I insist.

TYLER- *(getting testy)* I said, you first!

NEIL- No! You go first!

TYLER- Say something!

NEIL- YOU say something!

TYLER- You!

NEIL- You!

TYLER- YOU!!!!!!

NEIL- YOU INFINITY!!!

TYLER- I'll show you Infinity!

Tyler punches Neil. Neil punches back. They start slugging it out, falling on the ground, rolling all over each other. Stage hands emerge to drag them off.

Naming Eve

By John Cospers

Adam and Eve stand behind a bush.

ADAM: Okay, we'll settle it this way. Heads, your name is Eve. Tails, it's Barney.

Adam tosses a cat in the air. The cat SCREECHES.

Samson's Hair

By John Cospers

Delilah plays with Samson's hair.

DELILAH: Samson, how do you keep your hair so silky and strong?

SAMSON: I use Head and Shoulders.

DELILAH: Where did you get that?

SAMSON: I took 'em off a Philistine.

Deleted Scenes from the Bible: Fishers of Men

By John Cospers

Peter walks on with a fishing pole. Marv follows, a hook stuck in his mouth. Jesus sees them.

JESUS: Oh, come on, guys, it was a figure of speech.

The Lame Can Walk

By John Coper

Marcy and Joseph enter.

MARCY: Come, Joseph, this man is a miracle worker. He made the blind to see, and the lame to walk.

JOSEPH: The lame to walk? How'd he do that?

"Staying Alive" plays. A lame looking nerd walks across the stage in a "cool" manner, ala John Travolta in Saturday Night Fever. Marcy and Joseph watch in amazement, shrug, and exit.

They Laughed at Noah

By John Cosper

ANNOUNCER: The next time someone knocks your faith, just remember, people laughed at Noah too.

The guy enters, points off and up at Noah in the ark.

GUY: Hahaha! Hey Noah! The lake's that way. What are you doing up there? Hahaha! Hey, how's it smell with all them animals? Hahaha! All that work on a boat, only to have it invaded by animals? I bet you're pooped! Get it? Hahaha! Pooped! Ahahahaha!

Thunder claps loudly.

GUY: What the heck was that?

The Answer is Six

By John Cospers

One blonde enters, stands at center stage, and looks up at a fixed spot. The other five blondes enter and form a semi-circle around the first blonde, staring up at the same spot.

The blondes huddle up. One blonde sticks her head up, looks around, then dives back into the huddle.

The huddle breaks. The first blonde runs off stage. The second and third blondes pick up a fourth blonde on their shoulders. The fourth blonde grabs onto the fixed spot, which is an imaginary light bulb. Blondes 2 and 3 spin the fourth around in a circle as the fourth holds onto the lightbulb.

The light bulb comes out, and the Blondes 2 and 3 set the Blonde 4 down. Blonde 4 spins around, dizzy. She hands the burned out bulb to the fifth blonde.

The first blonde returns to the stage, holding an imaginary light bulb. Blonde 1 hands the new bulb to Blonde 4. Blondes 2 and 3 pick Blonde 4 up and spin her in the opposite direction, screwing the light bulb back in.

Blondes 2 and 3 set Blonde 4 down. Blonde 6 reaches up and pulls on an imaginary cord, turning on the light bulb. The six blondes exit. A brunette enters.

BRUNETTE: The answer is six. It takes six blondes to screw in a light bulb.

Deleted Scenes: The Ark

By John Cospers

Four guys walk on stage carrying the Ark on poles (can be pantomimed). One of the guys in the back is humming the Raider's of the Lost Ark theme. They get 2/3rds of the way across when one guy in the front stops the group and turns to the hummer.

LEAD: Johnson! Do you have to hum that song every time we carry the Ark?

He glares at Johnson a moment. They start forward. After a few steps, the humming starts again.

Easter Bunny

By John Cospers

A kid sits on the Easter Bunny's lap.

BUNNY: What would you like for Easter?

KID: Hasenfeffer!

Ultimatum

By John Cospers

A televangelist is on stage. An operator is standing by with a telephone.

TELEVANGELIST: We are in the final hours, children, and we are still way short of our goal. Remember, if we don't raise one million dollars by midnight, God is going to call me home.

The phone rings.

OPERATOR: Hello?... Yes... Yes... I'll tell him. We just got a million dollar pledge from God.

TELEVANGELIST: Really?

OPERATOR: Yeah. The last thing He wants is you dropping by.

Heber's Wife

By John Cospers

Sisera runs up to Jael, out of breath.

SISERA: Sorry to bother you. I just came from a battle. The Israelites are after me. Do you mind if I hid in here?

JAEL: Why no, come right in.

SISERA: Thank you.

Sisera runs off, into the house. Jael picks up a hammer and long spike.

JAEL: I don't mind at all.

Merry Christmas

By John Cospers

A bell ringer is ringing a bell as people walk by. Two people walk by.

RINGER: Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas.

A third man walks by.

RINGER: Merry Christmas.

The third man turns to the Ringer.

THIRD MAN: Racist.

The Last Shall Be First... Part 2

By John Cosper

ANNOUNCER- *(from off stage)* Jesus said that the last shall be first, and the first shall be last. To help you all understand what he meant, please welcome Tyler and Neil.

Tyler and Neil walk out on stage. They stop, don't say a word for a long, long pause. They look at each other, then look at the audience. No emotion on faces. Just, silence. Then finally...

NEIL- Go ahead, man.

Tyler hits Neil, and they start brawling as before. Stage hands clear them off.

Deleted Scenes: Mrs. Peter

By John Cospers

ANNOUNCER: And after the rooster crowed 3 times, Peter went out of the city to weep, where he was interrupted by a phone call from his wife.

WIFE- Peter? It's Misty.... You remember, Misty? Your wife? Are you ever coming home?... What do you mean he got arrested?... Huh, well, best stay out of it. If they ask you, just deny everything... Three times? Well good for you... What do you mean, it's not? You'd rather leave me with the kids and this mortgage so you can die with your buddy?... Fine, go grieve over him, but when you're done, could you stop by the store?... Well, we're out of milk, eggs, and bread. The kids need juice boxes for their lunches. Oh, and could you pick up some chicken?... Oh knock it off!

Prayer for Patience

By John Cospers

Roy is on his knees, praying.

ROY: And Lord, please grant me patience, so that no matter what happens, I can wait, knowing that you are--

OPERATOR: We are terribly sorry, God is now assisting other prayers. Please hold, and God will be with you shortly.

Hold music starts to play.

Imitating Samson

In memory of Michael O'Donoghue
By John Cospers

An actor walks on stage.

ACTOR: Everyone has their favorite Bible hero. My personal favorite was always Samson. I love how he killed all those bad guys with a donkey's jawbone, and how he killed a lion with his bare hands. And the time he lit those foxes' tails on fire and burned all the crops? That was awesome. I'd like to do my impression of Samson for you. This is Samson after he had his eyes gouged out.

The Actor grabs his eyes and starts SCREAMING and kicking and flailing all over the stage, off the stage, through the audience, and out.

The Eunuch

By John Cospers

ANNOUNCER: Before Philip disappeared, he made sure to get the eunuch's mailing address, so they could keep in touch. And it came to pass, Philip wrote about his encounter for a book called the Acts of the Apostles, and he wrote and shared it with his friend.

Gary the Eunuch enters.

EUNUCH: Hey, Philip? It's Gary . Gary , from Ethiopia ? Yeah, good to hear your voice too. Listen, I got your email with the story? Great stuff, man. I'm really glad you could use it. Uh, there's just one thing. Do you have to refer to me as Gary the eunuch?... The eunuch, you called me a eunuch in the story... Well, yes, I am a eunuch, but do you have to go advertising that? I mean when I go to parties, I tell people, "Hi, I'm Gary ," not "Hi, I'm Gary the eunuch..." I know, my name's not the important part... I know, but... two thousand years from now, I'd rather people read this and go, "Wow Gary got saved," not "Wow, that Gary guy's a eunuch." Well, what about this. Could you take my name out of it?

Deleted Scenes: Paul Gets a Job

By John Cospers

ANNOUNCER: Each time Paul went into a town, he would take a job so that no one could say he lived off the people. He worked as a merchant, a tent maker, and one time as a telemarketer.

Paul sits at a desk with a headset.

PAUL: Hello, is this Mrs. Blankenship? Hello, Mrs. Blankenship, I'm Paul, a disciple of Jesus Christ called by his grace to be an ambassador for the gospel, calling on behalf of AT&T. Greetings to you and peace in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Mrs. Blankenship, are you happy with your current long distance provider?... Hello?... Hello?

The Last Shall Be First... Part 3

By John Cosper

ANNOUNCER- *(from off stage)* Jesus said that the last shall be first, and the first shall be

last. To help you all understand what he meant, please welcome Tyler and Neil.

No one walks on stage. Silence. Blank stage. Silence. Blank stage. Suddenly a huge commotion of fists, kicking, crashing, breaking glass, yelling, and screaming erupts from off stage. This goes on for 45-60 seconds. Suddenly Neil gets flung on stage. He stands, looks at the audience then runs back off stage. The fighting resumes and continues for as long as the laughter does or until you can't stand it any longer.)

Rachel and Leah

By John Cospers

Leah walks into the dining room and sees Rachel at the table in her pajamas.

LEAH: So it's true. You are sleeping with my husband. I can't believe you! My own sister! How could you do this to me?

RACHEL: Because he's my husband too.

LEAH: Oh yeah.

Daniel and the King

By John Cospers

(Daniel enters with the King and reads the writing on the wall.)

KING: We were sitting down to a nice dinner when all of a sudden this hand appeared and wrote that message. What could it mean?

DANIEL: Well, it's not good. Tonight, you will be murdered, and your kingdom will come to an end. Babylon will fall, and the Persian Empire will rise.

KING: That's awful!

DANIEL: But there is good news, King.

KING: Yes?

DANIEL: I just saved a bunch of money on my car insurance by switching to Geico!

Video Store

By John Cospers

(Rick walks up to Tony, a video store worker.)

RICK: Hey, what happened to your back room? Where'd all the dirty movies go?

TONY: New management. We were bought out last month, and the adult films were the first to go.

RICK: That's ridiculous! You really wanna give up that revenue, let alone deprive a man of his right to watch porn?

TONY: I'm sorry, sir. Not my decision.

RICK: Well, I guess I'll be going to that other video store from now on. Later, Tony.

TONY: Take it easy, deacon.

Jonah Goes Home

By John Cospers

ANNOUNCER: Jonah left Ninevah, and went home, where he lived the rest of his days a single man.

Jonah walks up to Haley.

JONAH- Hey there. I'm Jonah. What's your name?

Haley turns and gets a whiff of his fishy smells.

HALEY: Dude, you smell like fish!

Haley gags and runs off.

Prosperity

By John Cospers

Pastor Feelgood enters.

PASTOR: The Lord wants to prosper you. He doesn't want you to suffer sickness or persecution or even debt. If you trust in the Lord he will bless your job, your home, your family, and your life.

A Martyr, bloodied and beaten and in Biblical attire, enters.

PASTOR: He will give you a better life, and all you have to do is trust him. Just open this book and listen to the witnesses who trusted Him!
MARTYR: (*upbeat*) I was beaten, stoned, flogged, whipped, jailed, flogged again, whipped again, and then stoned one more time before they dipped me in boiling oil and then crucified me. Yes, sir, that's how the Lord prospered me.

The Pastor gives a stunned look to the Martyr, who smiles back.

Solomon's Wives

By John Cospers

Trudy 1 enters.

TRUDY1- Hi there. I'm Trudy, Solomon's wife? He sent for me.

Trudy 2 enters.

TRUDY2- Hi, I'm Trudy? My husband Solomon sent for me.

TRUDY1- You liar!

TRUDY2- Excuse me!

TRUDY1- You can't be Trudy. I'm Trudy!

TRUDY2- Our husband has 300 wives. You think they all have different names?

TRUDY1- Well, I'm the fun Trudy. He said so himself.

TRUDY2- Whatever. He told me you snore.

TRUDY1- He wrote Song of Songs for me!

TRUDY2- Told me that too. Tells it to every one of his wives!

TRUDY1- Why you little--

They begin sissy slapping each other.

Pilate's Wife

By John Cospers

Denise enters in a huff. Maggie is sitting in a comfy chair sipping wine.

DENISE: My husband is such an idiot! I had this dream, right? About this guy from Nazareth, and it was very clear: do NOT let your husband kill the man from Nazareth. So I go to him and I say, "Honey, don't kill that guy!" And what does he say? "Not now, Denise. I have a country to run."

MOTHER: It's your own fault. I told you not to marry him.

DENISE: You did not! You told me to marry Pilate!

MOTHER: I said airline pilot, not Pontius Pilate!

Alms for Starbucks

By John Cospers

Glen and Lucy enter wearing winter coats.

LUCY: Can you believe they're raising taxes again?

GLEN: Lousy Democrats and their social programs. Don't they know that's what charity's for?

Charlie, a homeless man, walks up to the two.

CHARLIE: Excuse me, can you spare a few bucks?

GLEN: Sorry, I don't have any cash.

Charlie exits quickly.

LUCY: Hey, you want some Starbucks?

GLEN: Sure. *(pulls out some cash)* Get me an eggnog latte.

Bathsheba's News

By John Cospers

David is drinking water. Bathsheba walks up.

BATHSHEBA- David? I'm pregnant.

David does a spit-take – in her face.

Righteous Laugh-in'

By John Cosper

CHARACTERS

John, Addie, Megan, Denny, Beth

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: This scene is written much like the musical one-liner bits that used to be featured in the Cocktail Party segment on *Laugh-In*. The way the scene goes is some go-go music plays, and the cast dances (or for those who don't dance in church, the cast "moves interpretively"). The music pauses from time to time, and cast members do the one liners and short scenes. Music and dancing separate every scene/joke. Actors should wear distinct, and funny, costumes. The cast can be expanded to include more actors.

Lights up. Music plays, then stop.

ADDIE- Did you hear about the skunk who went to church? He sat in his own pew.

Music plays, then stop.

JOHN- I hear Noah liked to play Poker.

MEGAN- Yeah but he wasn't any good. His favorite hand was 2 of a kind.

Music plays, then stop.

BETH- People tell me I'm dumb, but the other day a guy came up to me in a theater and asked if my seat was saved. Whoever heard of a chair becoming a Christian?

Music plays, then stop.

DENNY- I was washed in the blood of the lamb to get rid of my sins. Now if only I could find a cure for my zits.

Music plays, then stop.

JOHN- I bet Moses was the star of his high school swim team. How many schools had a guy who could do laps without getting wet?

Music plays, then stop.

ADDIE- I can't believe I failed my driving test. I stayed up all night studying the Bible.

MEGAN- What book did you read?

ADDIE- The book of Collisions.

Music plays, then stop.

DENNY- I decided to take up surfing, so I read the book of Duderonomy.

Music plays, then stop.

BETH- I always felt sorry for the minor prophets. They worked so hard for the Lord, but never got called up to the majors.

Music plays, then stop.

MEGAN- I bet after Jonah got done propheteering, he coulda got a job on a fishing boat. He could be the bait!

Music plays, then stop.

JOHN- Hey, fellas, if your mom ever tells you to get a haircut, just remind her the only guy in the Bible who got one had his eyes gouged out!

Music plays, then stop.

ADDIE- I bet the disciples drove a Honda, because my Sunday School teacher always said they were in one Accord.

Music plays, then stop.

DENNY- Did you hear what happened to Lot's wife? She was a-salted.

Music plays, then stop.

BETH- I'll tell you why the Israelites wandered the wilderness for 40 years. They had a man leading them, and he never stopped for directions.

Music plays, then stop.

ADDIE- Why did Adam name Eve Eve?

JOHN- It was either that or, "Hummina hummina hummina hummina...."

Music plays, then stop.

MEGAN- I can't believe someone as smart as Eve would listen to a snake!

DENNY- Why not? We listen to politicians!

Music plays, then stop.

BETH- *(to Denny)* Of course there's a God, of course creation is true. Do you think that a random explosion of molecules billions of years ago would one day have the sense of humor to make you look that funny?

Music plays, then stop.

ADDIE- Why do we pray on our knees?

MEGAN- You'd look awful silly doing it standing on your head!

Music plays, fade lights out.

About the Author

John Cospers is the founder of Righteous Insanity and the author of more than 800 skits and plays. He won the 1997 Christians in Theatre Arts Dramatic Sketch Writing Contest and has had more than 1000 skits in print from major publishers. He is also writes fiction, games, and film scripts and is a director on both stage and screen. He lives in New Albany, Indiana with his wife and kids.

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