

Daniel Curzon

MORE OPPRESSED THAN THOU
(a one-act play) by Daniel Curzon (415-585-3410)

CHARACTERS: (4)

(They can be almost any age.)

INTERVIEWER (Charlie Nose, super serious host)

GAY MAN

BLACK MAN

ZOMBIE

SETTING: A fairly large round table with four chairs

(LIGHTS UP)

INTERVIEWER: Good day, viewers! I'm Charlie Nose. And this is "The Charlie Nose Show."
Glad to have you aboard. My guests this time include people who have chosen to remain anonymous as they tell their stories for our important and serious informational improvement as a nation, as a global community, and as members of the human species. So would you welcome, please, my guests!
(Gestures a welcome.)

(The three guests come onstage, the Gay Man, the Black Man, and the Zombie.)

(Presumably the audience applauds as the guests take their seats, the three of them to one side, the Interviewer opposite them.)

INTERVIEWER: Welcome, gentlemen!

GUESTS: Thank you. . . . Yes. . . . Yum.

INTERVIEWER: Well, shall we get right to the heart of why I invited you on my program? The place of minorities in contemporary culture!

BLACK MAN: No coffee?

INTERVIEWER: Afraid not.

ZOMBIE: No brains?

INTERVIEWER: We've had to cut the budget.

GAY MAN: Really? I can remember back when –

INTERVIEWER: Okay, my first question! Would you describe yourselves as minorities?

BLACK MAN: Absolutely.

GAY MAN: Pretty much.

ZOMBIE: (after a pause) Sure. Why not?

INTERVIEWER: Would you maintain that you are “minorities” even when you may possibly live in communities where you, in fact, constitute the majority? In other words, a majority minority!?

BLACK MAN: Can we smoke?

INTERVIEWER: No. Only the host can smoke, and I am trying to quit.

GAY MAN: Any methamphetamines?

INTERVIEWER: No.

ZOMBIE: No brains?

INTERVIEWER: No. . . . But here’s a ‘no-brainer’ for you. Which of you, would you say, *chose* your personal identity?

BLACK MAN: What?! Yeah, I chose to be black. No, I take that back. My momma made me do it.

INTERVIEWER: (to Gay Man) And you, sir?

GAY MAN: I chose to be gay on May 24th last year.

INTERVIEWER: Truly?

GAY MAN: And several times before that too! (Laughs) I have lost count on how many times I have chosen to be gay.

INTERVIEWER: I’m glad that you are taking this interviewer so lightly, sir.

GAY MAN: Something tells me you don’t mean that.

INTERVIEWER: (to the third Guest) And what about you? Did you choose to become a zombie or were you born that way?

ZOMBIE: Hmm, let me think. (Thinks.) I’d say that I was not born as a zombie, per se. –

INTERVIEWER: So then you –

ZOMBIE: Let me finish!

INTERVIEWER: Of course. Finish!

ZOMBIE: Even as a small child, I felt there was a zombie inside me yearning to break out.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. How early?

ZOMBIE: Oh, about dawn, usually.

INTERVIEWER: I meant at what age did you have these feelings?

ZOMBIE: I don't know – two, three. My mother called it the Really, Really Terrible Twos.

INTERVIEWER: So your mother noticed these “tendencies” in you, early on?

ZOMBIE: Sort of.

INTERVIEWER: There were no other zombies in your family, I take it. Did she seek treatment for you?

ZOMBIE: Not until I ate one of her eyeballs.

INTERVIEWER: You're telling me that you ate one of your mother's eyeballs?

ZOMBIE: Gotcha on that one!

INTERVIEWER: You all too seem to find levity in what most of us consider a rather somber subject.

ZOMBIE: It was just an earlobe. She didn't even miss it for a week.

INTERVIEWER: And were you subsequently given any treatment, any medication perhaps?

ZOMBIE: My dad zapped me with a stun gun several times.

INTERVIEWER: And?

ZOMBIE: It didn't seem to make any difference, except that I got a hard-on when I ate Patty Ann from down the street. That had never happened before. Maybe it was puberty.

INTERVIEWER: You ate a little girl?

ZOMBIE: Yeah, but nobody liked her.

INTERVIEWER: You were arrested?

ZOMBIE: No. Everybody said I would grow out of it. And I was a juvenile besides.

INTERVIEWER: But you didn't grow out of it?

ZOMBIE: Yeah, I grew out of it. If I didn't, you think I'm gonna tell *you*?!

INTERVIEWER: I am curious why people did not seem, *apparently*, to want to help you with your . . . your zombiness.

ZOMBIE: I guess I didn't seem that different from the others boys. They said it was a phase.

GAY MAN: That's what they said about me too.

BLACK MAN: Funny, they never said that about me.

INTERVIEWER: Let me be inclusive here. (suddenly, to Gay Man) Would you say that you are promiscuous?

GAY MAN: Only when I can be.

INTERVIEWER: Meaning . . . ?

GAY MAN: Sometimes you settle down. And sometimes you have to eat out too!

ZOMBIE: Exactly!

INTERVIEWER: So you don't consider promiscuity an affliction, a disorder, a compulsion, an addiction, a treatable problem, and a misfortune?

GAY MAN: Are you kidding me? Not getting enough is most guys' misfortune! It makes them real mad, real judgmental.

INTERVIEWER: I hope that you are not referring to me?

GAY MAN: I don't know anything about your sex life. Unless *this* is your sex life – you know, probing people.

INTERVIEWER: (suddenly) I have a confession to make. Full disclosure. I have never had a homosexual experience, I am obviously not black – just a little Cherokee Indian, way back – and I admit that you are the first zombie I have ever met in person. So I can't actually say that I understand your life experiences, not having shared them. Oh, yes, I read, and I have boned up on the lifestyle of each of you. Still, I have some nagging questions.

BLACK MAN: That's why we're here. And the handsome honorarium!

GAY MAN / ZOMBIE: (agreeing) Unquestionably . . . Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I would venture that three of you have made incredible gains in recent years, as representatives of the group you happen to be members of –

GAY MAN: But we're not stereotypes!

BLACK MAN: No profiling!

ZOMBIE: We *are* in a lot of movies.

INTERVIEWER: All that said, let me ask this. Does any one of you feel, *possibly*, that you are misunderstood, misrepresented, or even treated unfairly because of who you are?

GUESTS: (as one) Yes!

INTERVIEWER: I see. And in what way do you feel this?

BLACK MAN: I still can't get a cab!

GAY MAN: I'm not looking forward to the Last Judgment.

ZOMBIE: You don't hear enough about zombie marriage.

INTERVIEWER: Would you feel that any one group suffers more than another, not to pit you against each other. Or audience would not want to see that!

BLACK MAN: Is there any question about who gets the raw end of the stick?

GAY MAN: Yes, everybody knows who that is.

ZOMBIE: Who?

BLACK MAN / GAY MAN: Me!

INTERVIEWER: Ah, we seem to have a disagreement here.

BLACK MAN: Ain't no disagreement here. The blacks get nothing but grief.

GAY MAN: And Affirmative Action.

BLACK MAN: You don't need Affirmative Action. You're white.

GAY MAN: Tell that to crackers. Tell it to the black holy rollers while you're at it. Tell it to the fundamentalists of all faiths. Tell it –

BLACK MAN: Oh, go tell it on the mountain! Don't tell me who to tell. And why you got a gay and zombie on this show? You trying to equate the suffering of us black folks with gays and zombies?!

GAY MAN: Or gay rights and zombie rights! How demeaning. I don't eat the living!

BLACK MAN: How about the dead?

GAY MAN: Oh, shut up. You don't know the first thing about what gays have had to, and still have to, put up with? And to tell the truth, the so-called other "minorities" are some of the worst homophobes in the world!

BLACK MAN: Bullshit! You fag!

GAY MAN: (to Black Man) How come you can call me a fag, but I have to call you the n-word?!

BLACK MAN: You'd better not even call me that!

INTERVIEWER: (to Zombie) And how do you people feel about gay rights?

ZOMBIE: "You people"?!

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure all zombies are not alike. Still, there must be a consensus, a general feeling among them. Is there not?

ZOMBIE: I don't really socialize with too many other zombies. We only get together on special occasions, like earthquakes or nuclear disasters.

INTERVIEWER: I know there are African-American zombies, because I have seen them in movies, but are there any gay zombies?

BLACK MAN: Careful now!

GAY MAN: We are everywhere.

BLACK MAN: That's for sure. Can't get away from them anymore.

GAY MAN: I beg your pardon? As if you haven't hogged all the attention and all the sympathy for decades and decades!

BLACK MAN: I don't wanna see no dudes kissing.

GAY MAN: How about lesbians?

BLACK MAN: Now that's what I call gay rights!

ZOMBIE: We're still usually the villains. And, so far as I know, there has never even been one zombie love story.

BLACK MAN: I don't want to see zombies kissing either! Their lips will fall off!

GAY MAN: I agree. Quite horrible.

INTERVIEWER: So am I beginning to feel a consensus growing here – that perhaps zombies are the most misunderstood minority?

BLACK MAN: Give me a break. No one has it worse than the blacks.

INTERVIEWER: What about your crime rate?

BLACK MAN: Some of those things aren't even crimes, or shouldn't be!

GAY MAN: I am happy to see that homophobia in some places is gradually becoming un-cool, but we are *hardly* all the way there yet. Maybe homophobia should be labeled a crime. De-criminalize *me*. Criminalize *it*.

ZOMBIE: I'm pretty sure "my people" will eat homosexuals, just like anybody else.

BLACK MAN: (to Zombie) jus don't make it compulsory. (about Gay Man) Like he wants!

GAY MAN: You wish. Believe me, we will make plenty of room for exceptions, like you.

BLACK MAN: I'm not sucking it. No way!

GAY MAN: You think about it more than I do!

ZOMBIE: I don't think I want to *suck* it either.

BLACK MAN: You, you can bite it off!

GAY MAN: Why do so many people think we want just anybody! Do you seriously think I want a zombie touching me anywhere?

INTERVIEWER: (to Zombie) What do you say to that? Would you say that zombies are the last minority it is completely acceptable to despise?

BLACK MAN: Jesus, man, there ain't no nice zombies!

GAY MAN: If there are, they certainly aren't showing themselves a lot.

ZOMBIE: So it seems I'm the low man on the totem poll when all's said and done. I suspected as much.

BLACK MAN: But you're a fucking zombie!

ZOMBIE: So I've heard.

GAY MAN: You probably deserve to be the low man!

INTERVIEWER: I guess, it would seem, that bigotry can raise its ugly head anywhere.

GAY MAN: Are you really Charlie Nose? You sound more like that insufferable P.C. John Cujones [*sic*] on ABC television!

BLACK MAN: Yes, he's awful. So full of himself. So —

INTERVIEWER: I resent your comparison. I am a serious journalist.

BLACK MAN: That's why you have a zombie on?

INTERVIEWER: Zombies are hot right now. My producer made me do it.

ZOMBIE: Hey, I'm sitting here! Zombies have feelings too, you know!

GAY MAN: Yeah, but they're *bad* feelings. I don't kill anybody.

BLACK MAN: And we don't kill nobody either! . . . Well, not as many as zombies!

INTERVIEWER: Don't you think it's time some other minorities got some coverage?

GAY MAN / BLACK MAN: But not zombies!

ZOMBIE: Would you let me marry your sister?

GAY MAN: Would you promise to love and honor her –

BLACK MAN: Yeah, and not eat her brains!

ZOMBIE: We don't always eat brains! How do you know there aren't vegetarian zombies?!

INTERVIEWER: (to zombie) Do you wish to vote someday?

ZOMBIE: Hey! I already voted a few times. People ran screaming from the polling place.

GAY MAN: Have you tried vitamin supplements, maybe some cosmetic surgery?

BLACK MAN: Some grits! That's what you need.

INTERVIEWER: Is it possible that you are happy the way you are, the same way my two others
guests appear to be?

ZOMBIE: Sometimes. I don't always feel completely comfortable in my own skin.

BLACK MAN: How about in other people's skins?

GAY MAN: Exactly! (He and the Black Man high-five one another.)

ZOMBIE: Would you quit bringing that up all the time! Enough with the zombie jokes!

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that in general other people do not seem aware that possibly
zombies have more than just one interest, namely, the eating of human flesh?
Are even possibly multi-dimensional?

ZOMBIE: Yeah, we like to do other things!

INTRERVIEWER: Such as?

ZOMBIE: I don't know! . . . Skiing.

GAY MAN: (skeptically) Zombies like to ski! Do they like to ice skate too?!

BLACK MAN: Yeah, and they love karaoke too. I've heard them sing, believe me.

INTERVIEWER: Let's wrap this up. I do have another guest coming on. I can see her.
(Looks offstage.)

BLACK MAN: That's it? That's all the time we get?

GAY MAN: We have only scratched the surface – (Turning to Black Man with annoyance)
And, no, I don't want to scratch your surface! Get over yourself!

ZOMBIE: I can tap dance. But no, no time for that!

INTERVIEWER: We have one minute left. Would each of you sum up what you think the world
out there does not know about you and your world — and should know, to be
well-informed?

BLACK MAN: One minute? . . . I'll go! Folks need to know that if they'd just judge me on the
content of my characters instead of on the color of my penis, they'd know the real
Black Man.

GAY MAN: Yeah, I think I can finally see underneath the skin.

BLACK MAN: Right!

GAY MAN: . . . It needs work.

BLACK MAN: What?!

GAY MAN: My turn! The world needs to know that I'm not just a sexy, witty, marvelous human
being that you should be so lucky to know. I'm just like anybody else underneath.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, gentlemen.

ZOMBIE: Aren't you going to ask me?

INTERVIEWER: I'm afraid we're out of time.

ZOMBIE: No time for zombies?!

INTERVIEWER: My producer may cut you off, but what is you wish to say? Two words.

ZOMBIE: Two words? Fuck you? . . . Don't judge until you've walked in my shoes. Sorry, that's
(counting) eight words. Zombies arise! . . . Zombie rights?! (He stalks around with
arms extended.)

INTERVIEWER: Good night, audience! We'll be right back in a few moments. Thank you,
gentlemen, all three of you. I appreciate it.

(Lights out.)

(Lights back.)

(The Interviewer, the Black Man, and the Gay Man are lying dead on the floor or the table, piled on each other. The Zombie is eating the exposed calf of the Interviewer.)

ZOMBIE: (caught being a zombie, to audience) What can I say?! (contemptuously) What?! *You* don't know! It's delicious?! Have you tried it? (Goes for a bite.)

BLACKOUT