

THE GRAND EXPERIMENT

A Radio Play  
written by  
Kris Thompson  
for

CONE MAN RUNNING PRODUCTIONS'  
WAR OF THE WORDS - AN AUDIO PLAY BRACKET BATTLE

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## THE GRAND EXPERIMENT

### **CAST LIST**

Minister (Rick)            The Townson Family's Church Minister  
Marge (Schrenia)        Widow of recently deceased Edward  
Cassie (Lindsay)        Adult daughter of recently deceased  
Andrew (Patrick)        Adult son of recently deceased  
Uncle Harold (Rick)     Brother of recently deceased  
Rose (Patrick)           Long time neighbor of Marge  
*Narrator (Rick)        Don't read as part of cast list*

### **LOCATIONS**

Scene 1: Church (funeral)  
Scene 2: Family Home, study (wake)

### **SYNOPSIS**

Marge just lost her husband. She should be grieving...or should she? Time to jumpstart a new life after years of making do in a loveless marriage.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Genre: Drama or Comedy (basically wide open)  
Theme: Making Do  
Sound Q: Breaking Glass (provided)  
Pages: 10 (not including title/cast page)  
Length: N/A

### **ACTORS:**

Schrenia Kunkel Bockholt  
Lindsay Boyd  
Rick Evans  
Patrick Barton

SCENE (1) INTERIOR/CHURCH

MINISTER (overly dramatic)

**(far away)** -but it will not be the end of his story. No, his memory will live on through the family he loved so completely. Marge, his beloved wife, his adoring children Andrew and Cassie, his brother Harold and sister Maggie.

MARGE

**(up close, whisper)** He should have at least mentioned the mistresses. They're kind of like family.

CASSIE (shocked)

**(up close, whisper)** Mom!

MINISTER (overly dramatic)

**(far away)** Edward Townson was more than a great family man. He was also a respected attorney who devoted his life to the law.

MARGE (sarcastic)

**(up close, whisper)** The law? Please. He was a divorce attorney!

ANDREW

**(up close, whisper)** Mom! Shhh...

MINISTER (overly dramatic)

**(far away)** In conclusion, I think everyone who knew him would agree...The only thing Edward loved more than his family, and his clients, was (dramatic pause) his God.

MARGE

(Laughs out loud.)

CASSIE (embarrassed)

**(up close, whisper)** Mom! You realize that was out loud?

MARGE

**(up close, whisper)** Cassey, there are more of your Dad's mistresses here than family or clients. I'm pretty sure he loved them more than (sarcastic) "his God".

ANDREW

**(up close, whisper)** Mom. Hush!

MINISTER

**(far away)** Father, we ask You to send Your peace, during a moment of silence, to those persons who are mourning.

**FX: WOMEN CRYING, SNIFFING CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE UNTIL ORGAN**

MARGE

**(up close, whisper)** Do you hear that?

CASSIE

**(up close, whisper)** What?

MARGE

**(up close, whisper)** That's the mistresses.

CASSIE

**(up close, whisper)** Wow. That's a bunch.

ANDREW

**(up close, whisper)** Will you two please be quiet!

MINISTER

**(far away)** The family wishes to invite you to join them at Woodlawn for a short burial service, immediately followed by a gathering at their home in Crestwood.

**FX: CHURCH ORGAN MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE TO END OF SCENE**

MARGE

OK kids. Let's make this quick. I've got lots of plans to make. Is it absolutely necessary for me to go to the burial?

ANDREW (scolding)

Yes, we all have to go. Come on Mom...Sis. The car is waiting.

*SCENE (2) INTERIOR/TOWNSON HOME STUDY-HOURS LATER*

NARRATOR

Hours later at the grieving family's home..

**FX: CROWD OF MANY PEOPLE TALKING UNDER DIALOGUE**

MARGE

Yoo-Hoo Harold! Over here!

HAROLD

Oh good. I was looking for you Marge. I'm about to take off.

MARGE

I was in the kitchen with my neighbor Rose. Such a sweet woman.

HAROLD

It was a nice service. Nicer than my brother deserved.

MARGE

True. But, no point in dwelling on the past. Kids are in the study if you want to say goodbye. Thanks for flying up, Harold. Oh! There's Edith. Wow. She looks awesome. Yoo-Hoo! Edith!

**FX: DOOR OPENING, CROWD NOISE BEGINS, CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE**

UNCLE HAROLD

Cassie. Andrew.

CASSIE

Hey Uncle Harold.

**FX: DOOR CLOSING AND CROWD NOISE ENDS**

UNCLE HAROLD

Your Mom said I'd find you in here. Hiding out?

ANDREW

It's where the bourbon is. Want one?

UNCLE HAROLD

No. I'm heading out. Wanted to say goodbye. (pause) You know your Dad loved you both. And he was proud of you both too.

ANDREW

Proud? I graduated his alma mater and he wasn't proud. Finished law school and he wasn't proud. I was so determined to make him proud that I sat for the bar six times before I gave up. Now I work at The Bar. Like, I serve drinks at a bar named "The Bar".

CASSIE (compassionate)

Oh Andrew. You're too hard on yourself.

ANDREW

Dad said I'd never amount to anything. Maybe he was proud that I proved him correct. Wouldn't know. Haven't spoken in years.

CASSIE

Dad was an ass to everyone. When I moved in with my boyfriend and became an improv actress, Dad disowned me.

ANDREW

Didn't help that the boyfriend was an artist. Dad hated artists.

CASSIE

He's also a musician! He's been working on incorporating his music, his painting, and his culinary skills into this performance art dessert experience? There are white rabbits and a chocolate fountain. It's hard to describe.

UNCLE HAROLD

Well, that sounds...Intriguing? But you're right. There's just no denying he was an ass. I couldn't even get your Aunt Maggie to make an appearance although she would love to see your mother. I'm sorry you had to put up with him all these years. OH! I've got to run. My plane leaves at eight. Take care of your mother.

**FX: DOOR OPENING, CROWD NOISE BEGINS, DOOR CLOSING, NOISE STOPS**

ANDREW

Wait. Why isn't Aunt Maggie here. You'd think she would come to her own brother's funeral.

CASSIE

Are you kidding? Aunt Maggie knows what an ass Dad is...was. She was always telling Mom to leave him and live with her.

ANDREW

I wonder why she never left him. He gave her every reason.

CASSIE

Would you divorce a divorce attorney? Especially one like Dad?

**FX: DOOR OPENING, CROWD NOISE BEGINS, CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE**

MARGE

There you two are.

**FX: DOOR CLOSING AND CROWD NOISE STOPS**

MARGE

Why aren't you out there visiting? People are starting to leave.

ANDREW

I'm just pouring another drink.

**FX: ICE TINKLING IN GLASS AND LIQUID POURING**

MARGE

Drink fast. The sooner everyone leaves, the sooner I can talk to you about some ideas. I'm making some big life changes. Big!

CASSIE

Like?

MARGE

Well, I'm sure it comes as no surprise to you both that I've been in a loveless marriage for a long time. I'm not getting any younger and I have lost time to make up for. I need to start dating ASAP.

CASSIE

O...K...

MARGE

Did you know your father and I haven't had sex for five years?

ANDREW (uncomfortable)

Oh God.

MARGE

That's right. Five years. Nada. I've had to make do with this...device...your Aunt Maggie bought me at a party she attended.

CASSIE

Oh wow. I think Aunt Maggie is a bit of a bad influence, Mom. Do you remember that family reunion when you and Aunt Maggie got drunk and ended up naked together in the lake? And-

MARGE

Best reunion ever.

CASSIE

-now she's buying you sex toys?

ANDREW

Lalalalala. Stop talking. I really don't want to hear this!

MARGE

Grow up Andrew. What? You think old folks shouldn't...get it on?

CASSIE (laughing)

Get. it. on? Oh no. No, Mom. If you're going to be out there dating again, which I'm totally in support of, I think we should tweak your sexual vernacular.

ANDREW

Jesus. Could we not? We just buried Dad hours ago.

MARGE

Right. Sorry. In my defense he's been dead to me for years.

**FX: DOOR OPENING, CROWD NOISE BEGINS, CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE**

ROSE

Oh...sorry. I don't want to interrupt.

MARGE

Rose! You're not interrupting at all. Come in dear.

**FX: DOOR CLOSING AND CROWD NOISE STOPS**

ROSE

I just wanted to say goodbye before I head out. Kids, I'm so sorry about your Dad. My George has been gone...what? Seven years now? It will get better. Time really is the great healer.

ANDREW

Thank you, Mrs. Lawrence.

ROSE

Marge, you're going to be ok. You call me if you need anything.

MARGE

I will. Thanks Rose.

ROSE

Let me give you a little hug and I'll get out of your hair.

**FX: KISS**

CASSIE

Oh wow.

**FX: REQUIRED BREAKING GLASS**

ROSE (flustered)

Oh. Oh, my. What's...Wait! Where am I? Um...Oh, lookie there! Your son dropped his glass and, well, I need to feed my cats so I...I'd better get going! (nervous laughter)

**FX: DOOR OPENING, CROWD NOISE BEGINS, CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE**

MARGE

I'd love to see those cats sometime, Rose. Call me!

**FX: DOOR CLOSING AND CROWD NOISE STOPS**

ANDREW (mortified)

Good God Mom! You made me drop my glass! What were you thinking?

CASSIE (giggling)

Mom! You kissed Mrs. Lawrence...on the lips!

MARGE (analytical)

I don't know exactly what happened. I went to give her a peck on the cheek. She turned her head. I didn't want to be rude. Plus, her lips were so soft. I wonder if my lips feel soft like that.

ANDREW (embarrassed)

Geeze Mom.

CASSIE (chuckling)

That went on a bit longer than an accidental lip slip.

MARGE (lightbulb moment)

Did it? Well then. (pleased with herself) I guess I was right.

CASSIE

Right about what?

MARGE

About being gay.

ANDREW

Mrs. Lawrence is gay?

MARGE

No. Well, I don't know if Rose is gay. Maybe? How can one tell?

**FX: DOOR OPENING, CROWD NOISE BEGINS, CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE**

MARGE (CON'T)

Rose! You're back?

ROSE (suggestive if you like)

I forgot mention that I left you a pan of my veggie lasagna. You said you were swearing off meat. And if you run out of things to eat, I can come over and whip you up something lickety-split.

MARGE

Aren't you sweet Rose. Anticipating my every need! Thank you.

**FX: DOOR CLOSING AND CROWD NOISE STOPS**

CASSIE

Mom. Are you trying to tell us that you're gay?

MARGE

Yes. Or at least that I'd like to give it a whirl.

ANDREW

Mom, you can't just give begin gay a whirl.

MARGE

Why not? You gave it a whirl in college.

CASSIE

Wait. What? I never heard about this!

ANDREW

It was a one-time thing. During my experimental phase!

MARGE

OK. So, now I'm in my experimental phase.

ANDREW

You can't have an experimental phase at your age!

MARGE

Well pardon me for missing out on my opportunity to experiment because I was busy getting married and raising children!

CASSIE

Why can't Mom experiment? I think it's a grand idea! But don't hang out at Mrs. Lawrence's house. Remember, your cat allergies!

MARGE

Truthfully, I'm not allergic. I love pussy cats but your Dad-

ANDREW (annoyed)

Mom. Just say "cats".

MARGE

-wouldn't hear of pets in the house. I fibbed to protect you.

ANDREW

This is ridiculous. Dad just died and you two are going on about Mom having sex with Mrs. Lawrence? It's disrespectful.

MARGE (quick anger)

You have no idea how much disrespect I've endured in this marriage. Years of infidelity. Complete emotional and physical neglect. Don't you dare tell me about disrespect.

ANDREW

(pause) You're right Mom. I don't know why I'm defending him. He's always been an ass. You've always been a saint. I'm sorry.

CASSIE (matter of fact)

You're still seeking his approval. It's a father-son thing. See...my time at college wasn't a complete waste after all.

MARGE

Andrew, someday you'll realize you're ten times the man your father ever was. And besides, I don't know why you were so upset anyhow...I didn't say anything about having the gay sex with ROSE.

ANDREW

My God.

CASSIE (chuckling)

Mooom. No. You can't be gay and say, "having the gay sex".

MARGE

No? Why ever not?

CASSIE

Just say "having sex".

ANDREW

Or how 'bout you just don't say anything at all?

**FX: PHONE RINGING AND CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE**

ANDREW (CON'T)

Mom. Why do you still have the landline? I thought we agreed you didn't need it anymore. You have a cell phone.

MARGE

Yes, but your Aunt Maggie doesn't have a cell phone and I still need to be able to talk to her.

**FX: PHONE RINGING STOPS**

CASSIE

Hello. (pause) Yes.

ANDREW

Mom. Aunt Maggie can still use her landline to call your cell phone. (pause) Landlines and cell phones can talk to each other.

CASSIE (tickled)

Sure. Hold on. Mom, the phone. It's Mrs. Lawrence.

ANDREW

Oh Lord.

MARGE

Hello Rose! No. You're not interrupting. Why yes, I'd love to come to see your cats on Tuesday! Tea at three? Sounds perfect!

CASSIE

And so, dear brother, Mom's grand experiment begins.

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