



**DAN
CODY'S
YACHT**

**BY ANTHONY
GIARDINA**



**DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.**



DAN CODY'S YACHT
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For Doug Hughes

DAN CODY'S YACHT was originally produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) on May 15, 2018. It was directed by Doug Hughes, the scenic design was by John Lee Beatty, the costume design was by Catherine Zuber, the lighting design was by Jen Schriever, the sound design was by Fitz Patton, the dialect coach was Ben Furey, and the production stage manager was Stephen Ravet. The cast was as follows:

KEVIN O'NEILL Rick Holmes
CARA RUSSO Kristen Bush
CATHY CONZ Roxanna Hope Radja
ANGELA RUSSO Casey Whyland
CONOR O'NEILL John Kroft
GEOFF HOSMER Jordan Lage
PAMELA HOSMER Meredith Forlenza
ALICE TUAN Laura Kai Chen

DAN CODY'S YACHT was developed as part of Chautauqua Theater Company's New Play Workshop series, 2017, underwritten by the Roe Green Foundation.

CHARACTERS

KEVIN O'NEILL

CARA RUSSO

CATHY CONZ

ANGELA RUSSO

CONOR O'NEILL

GEOFF HOSMER

PAMELA HOSMER

ALICE TUAN

SETTING

The play takes place in various locations in and around the fictional towns of Stillwell and Patchett, Massachusetts—both towns in the far outer ring of suburbs around Boston—from September 2014 to June of 2016.

NOTE

In several speeches, long and short, I've used parenthetical indentations to break up the speech. The intention is not to suggest that the characters speak in paragraphs, but that something has happened within the speech to require a shifting, either up and down, that should happen more quickly than would be indicated by the use of a beat.

Also, I've used the / and \ notations to indicate when characters are stepping over each other's dialogue.

The poem "Trees" was written by Grace Howe. Permission to use the poem in performance has been granted by the poet, for no additional royalty fee.

DAN CODY'S YACHT

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A high school classroom. Two chairs, a school desk.

Cara Russo, late 30s, attractive, dressed in teacher garb but with some attention to style. Tired, though. It's the end of a long day of teaching.

Kevin O'Neill, mid-40s, in a very good suit. A handsome guy, confident and ready to be amused.

An after-school conference. Cara and Kevin, both seated in chairs.

KEVIN. So you gave him an F because it was clear he hadn't read the book.

CARA. *(Moves hair out of her eyes.)* That's basically it, yes.

Beat. He regards her.

KEVIN. And the book was *The Great Gatsby*?

Is she intimidated by him, or by his manner, or by something in the question itself? Whatever, she fights it.

CARA. Correct.

KEVIN. He gets no credit for trying to fake his way through?

She smiles politely.

Can I see the paper?

She hands it to him. He takes out a pair of glasses, proceeds to read. Then he looks up at the lighting.

Jesus. How are these kids supposed to—

He looks at her.

You'll go blind at fifty. You have a good pension? Teachers—? I should know this.

CARA. I have an excellent pension.

KEVIN. Good, then.

He continues to look at her, smiling, until she becomes uncomfortable.

CARA. You were going to read the paper.

KEVIN. Right.

He reads, amused.

Well, he does say some good things. "Money corrupts." Now there's something I haven't heard before.

CARA. Unfortunately what he's saying has nothing to do with the book.

KEVIN. So an F. (*Bristles dramatically.*) Harsh.

She holds her ground, and he continues to stare at her, as if trying to figure something out.

How are you teaching it?

CARA. Excuse me?

KEVIN. How are you—what approach are you taking? Do you have a—
a—is there a point of view you're trying to put over?

CARA. Mr. O'Neill.

KEVIN. Kevin.

CARA. Everyone intelligent who reads a book—every *teacher*—has a point of view.

KEVIN. (*A smile.*) Are you teaching them to hate money?

Beat. In reply, she simply looks at him.

Because what an opportunity. Yes? In this select high school with terrible lighting.

He takes a card out of his pocket and writes something on the back of it.

And you live in Patchett, don't you? That depressed little mill town—*ex-mill town* across the river. You drive over that river every morning and come to this Brigadoon, to confront a sea of bland,

handsome, one might even say gorgeous young faces—sixteen, eighteen, unmarked. Lacrosse. Mount Desert Island. If they've ever worked they've worked as *lifeguards*. *Camp* counselors.

CARA. (*Still trying to be polite, smiling, though challenged.*) If this is an accusation, if you're suggesting I'm bringing / a bias—

KEVIN. These kids \ who can fake reading a book, get an F on a term paper, and still most likely have their paths greased to, at the very least, *Wesleyan*. What an opportunity. This book. To teach them—well, you tell me.

All of this has been said with great charm. They look at each other.

CARA. The operative words, I would think—

KEVIN. Yes?

CARA. In what you've just said. Are “most likely.”

Beat. She's gotten his attention.

“Most likely” have their paths greased to, at the very least, *Wesleyan*. “Most likely” but not “most certainly.”

She's touched something. He doesn't let her know. Tries not to let her know. But she knows.

You and I both know, Mr. O'Neill—

KEVIN. Kevin.

CARA. Excuse me. I'm actually not comfortable with Kevin.

As she continues to speak, Kevin reaches deftly into his pocket, removes his billfold and counts out a number of bills, folds them, and slides them across the adjoining desk toward her.

—That simple attendance at this school is no guarantee of getting in anywhere at all.

At some point during this last speech, she has become fixated on the cash that's been laid before her.

Excuse me.

He smiles.

Do I need to call the—

KEVIN. What? The school custodian? The principal's office? Have I just assaulted you, Ms. Russo?

CARA. (*Hard-nosed.*) Put them back please.

KEVIN. Let's—shall we?—let's give it ten seconds.

CARA. Put them away.

KEVIN. Ten seconds.

She stares him down for only three or four seconds, before she stands, goes for her pocketbook, a clear gesture that this is over.

Okay, let's call that ten seconds. I just want you to know the amount I've just placed in front of you is only sufficient to raise the grade from an F to a D. I wouldn't insult you by / pretending—

CARA. You're my \ last conference, Mr. O'Neill.

She's deeply embarrassed now. Can't look at him.

He looks at his watch. Stands as well.

KEVIN. Yes. Back to the office.

But he doesn't go.

Incorruptible Cara Russo. I've heard about it, now I've seen it for myself. Chosen by her peers to be the powerful voice of the teachers in our town's current, ill-advised plunge into liberal American mediocrity. The proposal to meld the two school districts—depressed Patchett, thriving Stillwell. To join the drug-addicted, poverty-ridden, low-achieving children of your little town to the drug-addicted but still high-achieving children of mine.

CARA. I'll be going now, Mr. O'Neill. If you wouldn't mind—

She hoists her pocketbook over her shoulder, gestures that he should leave.

But he doesn't leave.

KEVIN. Don't do it.

CARA. Don't do what?

KEVIN. Don't use your considerable power on behalf of an old, overworked, melting-pot idea. We don't *melt* here, Cara Russo. Not anymore. Look, why don't we have a seat.

CARA. Mr. O'Neill, I'm a single parent. It's four o'clock. I'd like to get home, have a run, make sure my daughter has something to eat, then prepare for what will no doubt be a very long meeting on this

very issue. Having ended the day by having to refuse a bribe, I'd say the challenges of the week have just come to a head.

KEVIN. What are you making?

Beat.

For dinner. I could use some ideas. I'm a single parent myself. I'm bringing up Conor alone.

He takes a seat, draws it far away from her, to assure her of her safety.

And don't think please that this is a come-on. I'm gay. Came out ten years ago. Should have done it sooner, but I was *enjoying* a double life so much. Shame on me.

Beat.

I bought truffle oil. I was in Whole Foods, I said, I bet that's good. Now it sits on the shelf.

CARA. (*Intrigued by him in spite of herself, though still not giving an inch.*) What—what is it you do, Mr. O'Neill? I'm curious what a man like you does.

KEVIN. (*Fully taking in her imputation.*) "A man like me." I'm in private equity.

CARA. Ah. Is that—are you—is that hedge funds?

KEVIN. I've never known what people mean by that phrase, but if that's useful to you, all right. It's not accurate, but all right. And now, please, there's something I want to propose to you.

CARA. Something that involves / money—

KEVIN. You live \ in a house in Patchett that could use some repairs.

CARA. How is it you know my house?

KEVIN. I've driven past it. Relax, this is not stalking we're talking about, I *prepare* myself for meetings, Ms. Russo.

CARA. Something you learn to do, I suppose, in private equity. Check out the houses of / potential—

KEVIN. You have a \ daughter who attends the high school over there. Bright girl, I'm sure. But Patchett High School does not produce *killers*. Or very much else, as far as I can see. The fact is, there is no "academic excellence" in Patchett, and you know it. Shall I go on?

DAN CODY'S YACHT

by Anthony Giardina

3 men, 5 women

In a small Boston suburb, a schoolteacher is struggling to get by when the wealthy father of one of her students surprises her with a financial proposal that could change her daughter's life. Suddenly, their worlds collide in ways that open up the question: What truly separates the haves and the have-nots? Is it wrong to seize an incredible chance, even if the circumstances seem questionable? Loosely inspired by a passage from *The Great Gatsby*, DAN CODY'S YACHT probes the troubling relationship between finance and educational opportunity in America.

"...the playwright [has an] undeniably witty gift for writing zesty dialogue."
—**The Hollywood Reporter**

"...[a] biting and discomfiting social commentary... [an] observant, darkly comic piece..." —**BroadwayWorld.com**

"...a match of wits... Giardina provides interesting characters, an interesting thesis, and always entertaining dialogue."
—**NYStageReview.com**

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