

CAREER DAY by Art Shulman

INTRODUCTION

The basis of CAREER DAY is a series of monologs where people in different occupations describe their employment to students attending Career Day at a school.

A given monolog can be done individually, perhaps even as part of a longer program which includes other material -- one-act plays, songs, or other performance pieces. Or, many, if not all, of the monologs can be performed together as a group in a production called "Career Day".

In the event that multiple monologs are being performed, it is recommended that the Guidance Counselor Introduction be used to introduce the whole piece, and that the Guidance Counselor Close of Career Day be used to conclude it.

In addition, if the Guidance Counselor is used, it is recommended that each of the individual monologs be introduced by the Guidance Counselor (as indicated in the script for each monolog), and commented on by the Guidance Counselor at the conclusion of that monolog (again, as indicated in the script).

Most of the monologs can be performed by either men or women, although there are several designed for one gender. For example, Mrs. Homemaker is performed by a female, while National Rifle Association Regional Representative, Hair Stylist, Lifeguard, and Sanitation Worker are performed by males.

While the monologs are provided in this book in alphabetical order (except for the Guidance Counselor, which is first) the monologs can be presented in any order. However, if the Hangman is one of those to be performed, it is recommended that it be presented after at least a few of the other monologues.

The script identifies the school as Greenwood High School. However, it is permissible to change the name of the school to suit the needs of the presenting organization. For example, if the performance is being done at, say, Springfield Middle School, then it is permissible (and at the discretion of the director) to rename Greenwood High School to Springfield Middle School.

Moreover, if a CAREER DAY production is planned, it is recommended that, in order to supply variety, the production utilize other material provided herein other than just the monologs. For example, the Cheer Coach can appear before the Guidance Counselor introduces the first monolog, as well as after each individual monolog (or some of them, at the Director's discretion).

Other material also involves a Wine Taster and Principal Furbish.

CHARACTERS

Ms. Suzette Crep	Assistant Principal	Female, 35-55
Sherry Appleby	Cheer Coach	Female, 21 and over
Ian Bibes	Wine Taster	Male, 35-55
Harold Furbish	Principal Furbish	Male, 35-55
(Hans Christian/Rowling) Grimm	Children's Book Writer	Male or female, 25-70
(Emmett/Twinkles) Bailey	Circus Shoveler	Male or female, 18-20
(Pierre/Antoinette) Sansagrime	Dry Cleaner	Male or female, 35-55
Sticky Ream	Flypaper Manufacturer	Male or female, 35-60
Mr. Ernest	Hair Stylist	Male, 25-45
Jake Stringer	Hangman	Male, 45-65
Professor (Carlyle/Ariel) Gibbon	Historian	Male or female, 35-65
Biff Sands	Lifeguard	Male, 20-39
Drucker Waterhouse/ Samantha Drucker	Management Consultant	Male or female, 35-55
Betty Winnebakoff	Mrs. Homemaker	Female, 35-45
Buck Shoate	National Rifle Association Regional Officer	Male, 25-65
(Harvey/Ima) Bracer	Orthodontist	Male or female, 35-55
Emmanuel Caan/Ann Rind	Philosopher	Male or female, 24-30
Dr. Syl A. Cohen	Plastic Surgeon	Male or female, 35-55
Phil O'Durrett	Sanitation Worker	Male, 35-55

SETTING

An auditorium stage, a classroom, or any other school location where a Career Day event might be held.

TIME

The present

AT RISE: We hear music associated with schooling. The GUIDANCE COUNSELOR enters.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Attention, attention! Hello boys and girls. Or should I say, hello young men and young women? Yes, I shall say young men and young women because, here at Greenwood High School, people, such as yourselves, are growing into young adults. Some people know from the time they are very little what career they want. But unfortunately, many people who at one time were young adults, such as yourselves, now wander through life gadding about in this job and that job, because they never decided early on on a career for themselves, such as they are. It's never too late for young adults, such as yourselves, to learn what some of the options are. And it's never

too late for a concerned educator, such as myself, your School Guidance Counselor, to educate you on what might be “out there” for you.

So, as is our tradition at Greenwood High, we are holding our annual Career Day, where you will learn about different careers from people, such as themselves, who have them. So today, I’ve arranged for an esteemed group, from a variety of professions to address you.

CHEER COACH

C-A-R-E-E-R D-A-Y.
Career Day!
Yay!

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

For those of you who don’t recognize her, this is Sherry Appleby, our school CHEER COACH. Thanks for being here today, Miss Appleby. Isn’t she great?

CHEER COACH

I’ve got spirit,
Yes I do.
I’ve got spirit!
How ‘bout you?
Yay.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

And for choosing the musical accompaniment that accompanies our program today I would like to thank our music teacher, Seymour Kofski – known to most of us as Sy Kofski. He’s in the booth over there. Thanks, Sy. Sy Kofski, everyone.

(A school related song is played.)

Thank you again Sy Kofski. That is, Mister Kofski to you students.

Today, for Career Day, I’ve arranged for an esteemed group, from a variety of occupations to address you. And here they are.

(PRESENTERS enter, including the WINE TASTER, who flirts with the Guidance Counselor. SHE doesn’t seem to mind much. At some point later on the WINE TASTER falls asleep.)

Ian! Later!

But to start, I’d like us to sing our school song, led by Sherry Appleby.

CHEER COACH

(Song)

Raise our banner to the sky
Hold Greenwood’s (or whatever the school’s name is) banner high.
Set the blue and gold a flashing. (or use whatever the school colors are)
It’s glory ne’er will die.

Rah-rah-rah.
 Truth and courage never will fail.
 Never will our brightness pale.
 Hail, hail, the gang's all here,
 So let's for Greenwood cheer.
 Bluuuuuuuuuuuuue. (*or use whatever the school colors are*)
 Gooooooooooooold. (*or use whatever the school colors are*)
 Greenwood, Greenwood, Greenwood, Greenwood High.
 Yay!

Now, without further ado, and I do tend to ado too much sometimes, I suppose, here is our first speaker. And the first speaker is... me.

I, Miss Crep – Suzette Crep to those of you speakers unaware of my first name --, I, Miss Suzette Crep, am, of course, the School Guidance Counselor. There are two important words in my title -- Guidance and Counselor. The first, Guidance, is more important. I am not just a counselor. This is not a camp! This is an educational institution.

My task here is to guide students so they are given correct direction. Ergo, the word Guidance in my title. For example, on the first day of class each year I go out of my way to direct new students on how to get to the cafeteria. Sometimes I must escort -- personally guide -- some of the less astute ones who find it difficult to comprehend simple verbal directions, such as when I simply tell them, "Take two lefts, a right, a left, two rights, go around the big bush, and take another right. (*Beat*) Now you're at the school library. Make two more lefts, a right, a left, and there you are at the cafeteria." (*Beat, aside*) Those darn pinheads!

I love my job!

(Mr. Furbish's voice over the loudspeaker)

MR. FURBISH

Attention everyone! This is Mr. Furbish, your principal. We are all aware of our overcrowded classrooms here at Greenwood High School. Therefore, we are encouraging all you students who are thinking of dropping out to do so as soon as possible. So, pick up those easy-to-fill-out dropout forms from Miss Billingsley at the main office. Isn't that right, Miss Billingsley?

MISS BILLINGSLEY

That's right, Principal Furbish.

MR. FURBISH

That is all.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

And now, our next speaker, whom I hope you will find equally informative as myself, a School Guidance Counselor, such as I am.

Hello boys and girls. Or should I say, hello young men and young women, because here at Greenwood High School you are growing into young adults. Some people know from the time they are very little what career they want. But unfortunately, many people who at one time were young adults now wander through life gadding about in this job and that job, because they never decided early on on a career for themselves. And so you are approaching the time when you should be thinking of what career could be in your future. It's never too early for young adults to learn what some of the options are. And it's never too early for me, your School Guidance Counselor, to provide you with the opportunity to learn what might be "out there" for you.

So, as is our tradition at Greenwood High, today we are holding our annual Career Day, where you will learn about different careers from an esteemed group, from a variety of professions.

So, without further ado, here is our first speaker.

CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITER

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR INTRODUCTION: And now, presenting a person whose name you may recognize, whose name you may have seen in print: (Hans Christian/Rowling) Grimm.

I'm so glad to be here on Career Day at Greenwood High School so I can advise you to choose a career where you can be creative, devoted to the truth, and not be afraid to be different. By following these principals I believe I now have quite a successful career writing books for very young children, who I just adore.

Some people think writing children's books is easy. They believe you don't need very much of a vocabulary, only need to think of simple plots, shouldn't get involved with complex emotional states, and always have happy endings. I say, "Bulldoody."

I'm one of the new breed of realistic writers for children. The books I write are more honest and true to life than most children's books on the market. Children's books are very important because they reach children at a formative time, and the lessons that kids learn carry over into adult life.

But what sort of lessons do many children's books teach? What do girls learn from Cinderella? They unrealistically believe a rich, handsome Prince Charming will show up, and are invariably disappointed later in life when the actual live husband they end up marrying is a schlub in comparison. What do boys learn from Jack and the Beanstalk? That they needn't be concerned about entering into a bad business deal, like selling a cow for beans; they'll end up rich anyway, with a green thumb to boot.

However, my books keep my loyal audience of children involved while teaching realistic, lessons. Kids trust me. I'm not condescending. I only use a bare minimum of graphic sex and I avoid silly violence, like characters seeing temporary stars after being whacked over the head. Any violence in my books is realistic. There are sometimes fatal accidents and funerals in my books, though I rarely touch upon drug deals gone bad.

Many children's writers do kids a disservice by eliminating fear from their books. Some of the great kids' literature of the past didn't do that. Hansel and Gretel, little kids lost and almost baked by an old eccentric. Humpty Dumpty, broken into fragments through clumsiness. Even the greatest children's book of all time, the Old Testament, filled with tales of murder, vengeance, and terrible acts of nature.

Occasionally, writers just starting out ask me for helpful hints and advice. I tell them to write about bears. Kids and parents are suckers for bears. Millions of kids every night take a stuffed bear to bed with them. Most kids grow up believing there is actually a species of bear called a teddy bear. Some way to raise scientists!

Unless taught otherwise, impressionable children believe bears are loveable and friendly. Is this what they should know when they're in the woods camping out? Wouldn't they be better off knowing that bears are ferocious dangerous beasts who would just as soon crush them, maul them, and tear out their insides with sharp claws?

I love writing books for little kids. It enables me to be creative, depict the truth, and feel special for being different.

I hope you enjoyed my little talk.

CHEER COACH

Write your story,
Tell your tale.
But be honest
And you'll never fail.
Storyteller, storyteller,
Write write write,
Go go go,
Fight fight fight!
Yay!

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR COMMENT: Thank you. I can "barely" contain my excitement over hearing that presentation. And one thing you young men and young women need to do in order to become successful in whatever career you choose is to bear down in your studies.

CIRCUS SHOVELER

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR INTRODUCTION: And now, for those of you who are, let us say, academically challenged, we have as our next speaker a person with experience that I'm sure will be of value to you. Here is (Emmett/Twinkles) Bailey.

This is a high school, right? So, dropping out of school is something many of you guys might be considering. So, on Career Day at Greenwood High School I thought I'd tell you about my experience to help you make up your minds.

A few years ago I dropped out of school, ran away from home and joined the circus, where I work now. I carry a shovel and a big dustpan, and my job is to follow behind the animals, sometimes the bears and horses, but most often the elephants. I pick up after them, if you know what I mean.

My daily world is let's say, different, even if some of the really strange side-show circus freaks have been eliminated. Do you think that's right? Don't you guys want to see a really fat lady, or a guy with two heads? Or a lady with a huge beard down to her belly?

Most circus performers I work with are a little wacko and couldn't have grown up normal. It's not your everyday family next door that teaches their kids skills like taming tigers, jumping from swing to swing fifty feet above the ground, or juggling eight bowling pins. But my parents were even more wacko. Making me eat broccoli. Waking me up early just to go to school. Grounding me just because I raided my Dad's liquor stash. Can you blame me for leaving?

My job is mostly routine, but once some bratty kids snuck into the stables and fed the elephants peanuts marinated in prune juice. That's when I went out and bought galoshes! Another time one of my elephants was rented out for a production of Aida, an opera where American performers, playing Egyptians, sing in Italian. I was the only one of the spear carriers carrying a shovel instead of a lance. During the triumphant march my elephant produced a triumphant production of her own, right on center stage. After she left I swept across the stage, and received more applause than the fat lady singer had after she finished her first aria.

But there's not much I can learn in elephant training which I can apply to my life, and besides it requires someone special who can discipline an elephant. I mean, when an elephant doesn't do what you want you can't just suspend her allowance. Basically you've got to beat them on the head. They say it's not really cruel or dangerous, since elephant skulls are really thick. But I know I couldn't handle it. I didn't like it when my parents did it to me.

In every job you learn certain fine distinctions after you've been at it a while. Like Eskimos have a hundred fifty words to distinguish different types of snow. Yesterday, I realized that as a circus shoveler I now know the names of seventy-five varieties of elephant turds. Popcorn, straw pie, mashed potatoes... Nah, there's probably not enough time to name them all.

Meanwhile, if any of you guys are trying to decide whether or not to drop out of school and run away from home, I have advice for you. Just drop out of school and find a job locally. Boxing groceries, for example. Don't join the circus. Based on my experience it really stinks. Or, find some other place to run away to. Hollywood, maybe.

I'll see you around.

CHEER COACH

Fill that shovel
Way up!
Fill that shovel

Way up!
 Pooper scooper,
 Pooper scooper!
 Way to go!
 Yay!

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR COMMENT: Thank you very much. I think our students here have picked up what you said.

DRY CLEANER

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR INTRODUCTION: Our next presenter is someone who does something that every community needs. Someone who helps make where we live really neat. I give you (Pierre/Antoinette) Sansagrime.

Most of you guys will end up working for someone else. You'll have a boss. You'll be told what to do, and important decisions about running the business won't be made by you. That's why I'm real glad to be here on Career Day at Greenwood High School, so I can give you an alternative by telling what it's like being what you call an intropanure. An intropanure is someone like me who started his or her own business and runs it. I am a dry cleaner. Got my own store. I started it a few years ago after the donut shop I used to own went belly up.

The general public thinks it's easy to run a dry cleaners. Just open the door, charge high prices, and boom, you're a success. So often we're taken for granted, the public not interested in distinguishing between a genuine French dry cleaner like myself, (Pierre/Antoinette) Sansagrime, from an Italian dry cleaner. They don't think we're the smartest people in town. When there's a bright kid in school, they predict he'll grow up to be a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist. Never a dry cleaner.

But a dry cleaner is, in a way, a Renaissance person, a multi-skilled, multi-faced businessperson. A dry cleaner has got to be like a chemist, knowing what to use to get out which type of stain. A dry cleaner must be a fine artist, delicately going over odd-shaped stains with just the proper solvent. The dry cleaner is at all times a salesperson who knows the customer thinks she's always right, and so must convincingly supply reasons why the sign outside promising one hour service does not apply in that customer's particular case.

Successful dry cleaners must use psychology to develop loyal customers, which is probably why you don't remember what the dry cleaner was wearing the last time you visited, and why dry cleaners steer clear of trendy hairstyles. You don't want your customer to resent if your clothes and hairstyle are more stylish than his or hers, so you try to seem an unfashionable type person.

A dry cleaner must have an eye for detail. When people bring in their load, if you don't notice rips, holes, or permanent stains on an item and write it on the ticket, they'll claim later you ruined their garment and demand you pay for a new one. It's almost impossible to notice when a customer brings in a garment she's already shrunk too much, and then blames you for. So then sometimes you've got to be like an attorney, explaining to customers that there are laws against

customers fraudulently attempting deception against legitimate dry cleaners. You don't like to lose a customer, but sometimes they claim the ruined item costs so much to replace that you'd never make up the difference.

A successful dry cleaner is like a detective, getting to know what (his/her) customers are like. A dry cleaner who is on the ball learns a great deal from the size and type of stains on their items, though (he/she) is professionally nonjudgmental and doesn't blab all over the neighborhood which customers drink too much, or barf over themselves, or can't control their sexual secretions, or obviously have moths flying all over their home.

A dry cleaner has got to be a whiz with numbers and letters, to correctly add up the bills, give correct change, and put finished orders in the rack in alphabetical order. That's A, B, C, and so on. But mostly (he/she) has got to be a genius for not getting people's clothes mixed up more often. When we get a load from a customer we write on the slip only the type of item -- two pants, three shirts, four pantaloons. We don't write down the color, size, or pattern because we don't have the time. Yet four out of five times we give our customers back exactly what they gave us, except presto, it's clean now.

So, it's not like I want you to become a dry cleaner. Who needs more competition? But you can consider being an intropanure in your own way.

I hope I've been of service to you.

CHEER COACH

He/she makes you neat,
 He/she keeps you pressed,
 Even if he/she is not
 Himself/herself well-dressed.
 Gets rid of spots,
 Gets rid of stains.
 A dry cleaner
 Has lots of brains.
 Yay!

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR COMMENT: Thank you for taking time out of you busy schedule to speak to us today. I know you must be pressed for time. Wow, it seems like you make a good living. You must really be cleaning up.

FLYPAPER MANUFACTURER

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR INTRODUCTION: And now I'd like to present a business owner who can tell you about the ups and downs of owning and running a business. No, (his her) company has nothing to do with elevators. I give you Sticky Ream.

Many of you kids may be thinking of going into business for yourselves. So, here on Career Day at Greenwood High School, one thing I need to warn you is that sometimes business is up and

sometimes it is not so good. And when it is not so good you need to persevere, and continue to try new things until it turns around. Take me, for example. I manufacturer flypaper. You know, that sticky stuff you hang and flies get stuck to it and soon pass on to fly heaven.

For a while there it was rough. I had was a business where sales kept going down. I owed the paper mill money. I owed the glue-maker money. I didn't know what to do next. I tried making my flypaper in decorator colors. That didn't work. I added lemon-scent. That didn't work.

We even ran TV advertising in a couple of places. This everyday guy is painting a chair in his garage, near the garbage. But a big shiny fly is buzzing his ear. Just then, the guy's wife comes in and while he's flailing at the fly he accidentally gets bright yellow paint all over his wife's face. The wife goes inside, and with a knowing look on her splattered face, brings out my flypaper and hangs it up. Next thing you know the guy is smiling as the stuck fly is struggling to extricate himself from the glue. Then the guy kisses his wife on the cheek and resumes his painting, not aware, being the everyday schmo he is, that his lips are painted yellow.

But that advertising didn't work either. So, I said to myself, "Why not take a step back?" At times when you take a step back it's like you're out of the forest and can see trees, you know.

Then I said, "Now that you've stepped back, take a good look at the competition." So I did and wasn't really impressed. Each and every one had a problem. Take the electronic bug killers that zaps em to death. One second flying in the air, the next second, poof, ashes. A technological marvel, but it makes too much noise. And you can't use it when you ain't got an outlet to plug into. Then you got an electric bill to pay. But beyond that, it just ain't morally right. Bugs are primitive. They should be killed primitively. It ain't their destiny to meet their demise by volts.

Then they got these sprays and candles that keep away flies. I'm sure your neighbor likes that, your sending all your flies to his place. Plus, it don't really get rid of the problem. Suppose all the neighbors light up candles the same evening. The flies are right back to your house!

The fly swatters -- you gotta wait till the flies land on something before you swat. How many times have you waited for a buzzing fly to land? Then he lands high on the wall and you can't reach him. As soon as you bring over the chair to stand on, he takes off. And if you do swat a bunch of them, then you gotta pick up all the dead flies one by one from all over your floor.

Flypaper's much superior to the others. You don't need electricity. You don't force the bugs to the neighbors. You don't waste energy chasing after em and then picking em up when you got better things to do. And it's morally right. If a fly is stupid enough to land on it when he can obviously see so many other dead flies stuck to it, if he can't distinguish an obvious death trap and realize he's landing on his own cemetery, then he's sure not the fit one who survives, is he?

I recognized this as I was still stepped back. I also recognized the main argument people have against flypaper -- they don't care for the sight of dead bugs hanging in the air, especially in the kitchen. You hardly ever see flypaper in a room presented in House Beautiful magazine.

So then I took another step back, and asked myself, "How do flies die in nature?" OK, some die of old age, though it's hard to tell a fly's age with the naked eye. Some starve to death when they get trapped between a screen and a window and can't figure out to get out. Some are killed by devices like my flypaper or swatters. But in nature the fly has a few natural enemies.

Then I put two and two together and made some changes. So now, my flypaper, in addition to coming in decorator colors, comes in three additional patterns -- Venus fly trap, spider, and frog. They're selling like crazy. I especially admire frogs. The frog sits there quiet. A bug flies past. And ZAP! The tongue shoots out and the frog's enjoying his snack.

There's only one other animal I ever known with a tongue as quick as the frog, and that's my (wife/husband). I think that's what attracted me to (her/him) in the first place. Unfortunately, (she/he) don't like the taste of insects and spits em out after (she/he) catches em. To (her/him) it's just sport. Most of the time the buggers just shake themselves off and fly away.

Anyway, kids, whatever career you do pick, keep going when things go bad. You can turn it around, just like I did.

CHEER COACH

Let's kick up our leg
Real high
For the catcher of
The common housefly!
Catch 'em, catch 'em
Real quick!
Attract 'em to the paper
Where they stick!
Yay!