



CONFESSIONS OF A HIT MAN

By Hank Kimmel

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CONFESSIONS OF A HIT MAN

A One-Act Play

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CHARACTERS

RICK NEWSOME.....38. Black. A former professional football player. Uses a wheelchair after being paralyzed in a football game 15 years ago. Used to be known as “The Firefly.” Now a potter. Trying to move from making “functional” pieces – vases, frames, and ashtrays – to more elaborate sculptures. Has conflicting need to control and let go. Looking for a sense of completion with his family and a sense of dominion with his art. He lives alone, but had an amicable separation from his ex-wife since they got divorced 10 years ago.

LEON FELLER...53. Black. A former professional football player. Used to be known as “The Hit Man.” Lives on his own, works at a church. Walks with a limp. Thinks clearly, most of the time. Trying to clean up his life, pay back child support and make peace with the past. Looking for a sense completion but finds he can’t move forward until he goes back.

SON....14. Bi-racial (White Mother / Black Father). Dutiful, but yearns to break free. Has just moved in with his father after living with his mother. Looking to make a connection with his father and the world. After being home-schooled by his mother, he has just started 9th grade at the Valley Regional High School, a rural high school in the Adirondacks.

SUMMARY

Entering the next phase of his life with his teenage son, a paralyzed ex-football player attempts make peace with the past when his tormentor returns with an offer that will either uplift or destroy them all.

SYNOPSIS

Rick Newsome, an ex-football player who uses a wheelchair, is ready to break forth – spiritually, artistically and parentally. After living alone for most of his adult life, Rick now has primary custody of his 14-year-old son, a decision he and his ex-wife, divorced 10 years ago, amicably made together.

Now a potter by trade, Rick’s life is disrupted by Leon Feller, a former professional football player who was responsible for Rick’s physical paralysis. Ever since his playing days ended, Feller, once known as “The Hit Man,” has strayed, until recently finding support through the Church of the Heavenly Brother. Upon his minister’s urging, Feller tries to find harmony after squandering many of his personal, spiritual and professional gifts.

As part of this cleansing – and as an effort to pay back debts – Feller tracks down Rick in order to come to terms with an important element of the past. Fifteen years ago in an otherwise meaningless preseason game, Feller (now 53), a ball-stalking free safety, and Rick (now 38), a flamboyant wide receiver, were part of a fateful collision that paralyzed Rick from the waist down. Feller, unrepentant at the time, claimed at the time he was just doing his job – while the formerly garrulous Newsome retreats into his own world, trying to block out any hint of regret or rage. He has largely succeeded until Feller reaches out. Partly to appease his son who has now expressed an interest in playing football, Rick agrees to see Feller, but only for 30 minutes at a prescribed time on a prescribed day.

When Feller shows up late, Newsome still agrees to see him, with shotgun at side. Feller has brought an offering, the most valuable thing in the world to him, but Newsome is adamant about not accepting it. Even though both men struggle to reconcile the past, by the end of the play, with a prod from Rick’s son, they have begun to free themselves from their own personal bondage – allowing them to stand more upright, but at the cost of giving up something previously held as dear.

Confessions of a Hit Man is a 70-minute drama that explores the nature of forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation. It is the story of a how two former professional football player try to free themselves from a web that has left them inextricably and destructively linked – and how they may be able to save their children, though they may not be able to save themselves. The play can be done with either simple or elaborate staging.

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PRE-GAME**PROLOGUE:**

In darkness, there are the sounds from a professional football game. A marching band. The murmur of fans. Cheerleaders chanting "Go, Go, Go" overtaken by a chant "Refs, you suck." A whistle blows and there is the sound of a football being kicked and then football pads and helmets crashing into each other. As the crowd gets louder, the audience hears the sounds of offensive calls and audibles, mixed in with defensive adjustments: "Blue 80"; "Mike 56"; "Watch the pass"; "Kill, kill, kill;." The crowd noise, moving up the Richter scale, drowns out these sounds. There is the hard crash of a tackle followed by silence. All three characters take a deep breath. They hold it without an exhale. Lights, slowly, start to come up to show.....

SETTING:

An art studio in a private home located in a remote part of the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. The space is modest and rustic. There is an automated potter's wheel; a desk where clay is molded and shaped; a shelf display of functional pottery -- vases, mugs, ashtrays; and, to the side, a picture of a 14-year-old boy next to a 38-year-old woman. The space is notably neat for an art studio, less bohemian and more business-like. The fourth wall consists of a large plate-glass window, which should be suggested, not actual. A couple of dumbbells (for weight lifting) are nearby.

ON THE EDGE:

FELLER sits in front of phone, eyes closed, partially in prayer or meditation.

AT RISE:

RICK NEWSOME is facing the plate-glass window with shotgun in hand. Rick's 14-year-old SON (Ricky) has just entered.

TAKING THE FIELD

SON

What are you doing?!

RICK

I know, I know, I know. I should just let it be.

SON

Is it – ?

RICK

The bear, yes. You don't see him?

SON

All I see is nothing.

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RICK

He used to come at night, now during the day.

SON

I still don't see him.

RICK

Behind the oak. Beyond the apple trees.

SON

I see a shadow.

RICK

I know I should ignore him, but he won't go away.

SON

I thought you told Mom –

RICK

The thing with the barn window was a complete fluke. I mean, my hand slipped, but only because...*(catching himself)* Never ever make an excuse for yourself – like I just did.

SON

Do you want me to put the gun away for you?

RICK

I can do it myself.

SON

(mostly under his breath) Of course.

RICK

What did you say?

SON

I'm back.

RICK

(transition) How was the Activity Fair?

SON

Good. The school has a lot of activities.

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RICK
Anything of note?

SON
A working farm.

RICK
Imagine that. When I went to high school, the only nature we had was a patch of poison ivy.

SON
The farm looked kinda cool, but the kid talking about it smelled like manure.

RICK
I can teach you how to grow strawberries. Would you like that?

SON
Sure.

RICK
I can also teach you how to throw clay. Would you like that, too?

SON
Sure.

RICK
What about learning how to win a chess game in eight moves or less.

SON
Yes, I would like that, too.

RICK
What about sports?

SON
They have sports.

RICK
What kind of sports?

SON
A large cross country team.

RICK
Did you tell the coach you can run a mile in less than five and half minutes – and less than that if you let me train you?

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SON

I didn't tell him that.

RICK

What did you tell him?

SON

I mostly looked.

RICK

To get your bearing?

SON

Yes.

RICK

What's in your hand?

SON

Um.

RICK

C'mon, Ricky. It shouldn't feel this forced between us. I know we're just getting used to living together, but it's going to fine. I'm not quite the dragon your mother makes me out to be. Yes, I like living my life with structure, but we're also going to have moments where we go with the flow.

SON

Thank you.

RICK

I'm not looking for thanks. I'm looking for us to have a meaningful time together. That's why your mother and I agreed it would be good for you to live with me during high school. I'm independent, and it would be good for me to teach you how we can be independent together.

SON

Thank you.

RICK

What's in your hand? You're clutching it like it's top-secret government information.

SON

It's a permission slip.

RICK

To?

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SON
Um.

RICK
What?

SON
Play football.

RICK
Okay.

SON
Then...?

RICK
What?

SON
Nothing.

RICK
You want me to look at the permission slip?

SON
I mean.

RICK
What do you mean?

SON
It's okay?

RICK
What's okay?

SON
To try out for football.

RICK
Try out?

SON
Yes.