

INCANDESCENT BLUE

A Ten-Minute Play

Paul Calandrino

Paul Calandrino
paul@paulcalandrino.com

© 2008 Paul Calandrino

CHARACTERS

Ms. Beth Anne Tabor	Schoolteacher with braces, 31
Eddie Tabor	Her no-good ex, 32
Sheriff's Deputy (offstage)	Male or female
Irving Hoyte (offstage)	Police negotiator
Students	2 boys, 2 girls, various bodies

Note: If the actor playing Ms. Tabor does not wear braces, a set of Fool-All Braces can be found online at Billy Bob Teeth (<http://www.billybobteeth.biz/products/index.htm>)

SETTING

An Oregon classroom.
Present.

Shots are fired in the dark. Five, six, seven rounds. Screams of high-schoolers. Lights rise. A classroom with some desks overturned. Two bodies lie on the floor. A teenage Boy and Girl are poised to jump out the windows. A Second Boy and Girl huddle and whimper at the back of the room. The rest of the class has escaped. The teacher, Ms. Beth Anne Tabor, stands behind her desk, a smoking semi-automatic supported in her outstretched hands.

MS. TABOR

I said get in your seats! Now!

GIRL

Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

BOY

Please!

MS. TABOR

What did I say? I said return to your seats!

BOY

I don't want to die!

MS. TABOR

The bell hasn't rung yet! How many times have I told you not to get out of your seats until the bell has rung?

Bell rings. Pause.

GIRL

Can we go now?

MS. TABOR

Uh, no. We have a situation now, I guess. Return to your seats.

BOY

Are you going to shoot us?

MS. TABOR

Not yet. You're hostages. Go on, sit. All of you.

The Boy and Girl go to their seats, as do the Second Boy and Girl. Ms. Tabor keeps the gun pointed at them. After an awkward moment ...

GIRL

Should I check to see if they're alive? Maybe we should call 9-1-1.

SECOND BOY

I did.

Distant sirens.

MS. TABOR

I said no phones in class! (*Shoots at him but misses. All the students scream and hunker.*) I am sick and fucking tired of you kids disobeying me and disrupting class! (*A lot of sirens, closer now.*) I will teach you to have some respect for authority.

SECOND BOY

But you're shooting at us! What did you expect me to do?

MS. TABOR

I expect you to obey the rules!

The sirens wind down outside the windows.

DEPUTY

(*Offstage on bullhorn, throughout.*) This is the Deschutes County Sheriff's Department. We have the school surrounded. Surrender your weapons and come to the window with your hands behind your head.

Ms. Tabor puts her back to the wall beside the window and yells out.

MS. TABOR

You've got to be fucking kidding me! Come to the window like a sitting duck?

DEPUTY

Who is that? Who's speaking?

MS. TABOR

Ms. Beth Anne Tabor.

DEPUTY

Mrs. Tabor --

MS. TABOR

Ms. Tabor! It's Ms.!

DEPUTY

Ms. Tabor, where's the shooter? Is he still alive?

MS. TABOR

I'm the shooter!

DEPUTY

Who?

MS. TABOR

Me! I am. Ms. Beth Anne Tabor. Didn't you talk to any of the students who jumped out the window?

DEPUTY

Hold on. *(Pause.)* Are you acting in self-defense?

MS. TABOR

No. Wait, yes! Wait ... no. I don't know.

DEPUTY

What's going on?

MS. TABOR

I'm having a bad day.

DEPUTY

(Pause.) Are you having your --

MS. TABOR

DO NOT ASK ME ... (Fires out the window.) Do not *DARE* fucking ask me if I'm having my period!

DEPUTY

(Pause.) Are you?

MS. TABOR

No! I am emphatically not having my period!

DEPUTY

(Pause.) How many days until? *(Ms. Tabor fires out the window until she runs out of rounds. She ejects the magazine and loads another.)* Throw your weapon out the window and surrender.

MS. TABOR

No!

HOYTE

(Offstage on bullhorn, throughout.) Beth Anne? This is Irving Hoyte. I'm the police negotiator. We need to talk.

MS. TABOR

No! Please take my number off your call list!

HOYTE

Pardon? Um, what seems to be the problem?

MS. TABOR

Nothing! Just a bad day! These brats think they can disobey me at will -- just walk over whomever they please -- because there are no consequences. What, detention? Suspension? Expulsion? Are these threats? They're gifts! I'm sick and tired of having my hands tied behind my back!

HOYTE

So this is a discipline thing? Is that why you brought the gun to school?

MS. TABOR

What? No, I always have the gun.

HOYTE

At school?

MS. TABOR

I have a license to carry a concealed weapon. I have a Second Amendment right to bear arms. And ever since Shirley Katz stood up for her rights as an American, and as an Oregonian, and as a schoolteacher, and as a divorced woman with fears, I have been --

HOYTE

Did you ever think of where that might lead?

MS. TABOR

Of course, I thought about where that might lead! What kind of a question is that? I'm an Oregonian! That's what we do in Oregon. We think. WE'RE THINKERS! Why else would we live in Oregon? Case in point: Ken Kesey! *(Fires out the window.)* Case in point: Ursula Le Guin! *(Fires out the window.)* Case in point: Matt Groening!

SECOND GIRL

Ms. Tabor? I think Robby's still alive. He needs medical attention.

MS. TABOR

He should have thought of that before he stood up.

DEPUTY

Mr. Tabor, no! Come back!

MS. TABOR

(Misunderstanding.) It's Ms.! How many times do I have to tell you!

As she fires out the window, Eddie Tabor, her ex, jumps in through the other window. She screams and fires at him but misses. He ducks behind the students.

EDDIE

Don't shoot! Beth Anne, it's me.

MS. TABOR

Don't shoot? Don't ...? You're the reason I bought this gun in the first place.

EDDIE

Honey, I ain't gonna hurt ya.

MS. TABOR

Oh, yeah? There's a restraining order that suggests otherwise.

EDDIE

I'd never hurt you ever.

MS. TABOR

Oh, so when you said you were going to, quote: "rip my head off my shoulders with an oil filter wrench and shove it up my sorry ass," that was an idle threat?

EDDIE

A poor choice of words, I admit it.

MS. TABOR

I ought to blow your head off right now!

EDDIE

You divorced me. Wasn't that enough? I've learned my lesson. I want you back.

MS. TABOR

In case you haven't noticed, you can't have me back. The sheriff is in line before you. Wait. What are you doing here?

EDDIE

I heard what was up.

MS. TABOR

Heard how?

EDDIE

Well, the gunshots and the sirens and the bullhorns and you shouting out the window all kind of tipped me off.

MS. TABOR

Where were you?

EDDIE

Up a tree.

MS. TABOR

What tree?

EDDIE

That maple over on the south side of the faculty parking lot. You can see it through the window.

MS. TABOR

You son of a bitch. You *are* stalking me!

EDDIE

Stalking is such an ugly word.

MS. TABOR

Call it what you want, you're sitting out there waiting to bash my head in, right?

EDDIE

Wrong! I sit out there every day.

MS. TABOR

That's what I'm saying.

EDDIE

If I wanted to bash your head in, I'd have done it already. I'm sitting up there because, every once in a while?, I hear your voice floating out of this window. It drifts up to me like a butterfly. One of them incandescent blue ones from the rain forest.

MS. TABOR

You mean iridescent.

EDDIE

I need you, Beth Anne. I need you bad.

MS. TABOR

You always needed me, Eddie.

EDDIE

That's true. You remember how you used to do my homework for me? I've always needed you. That's true.

MS. TABOR

Why'd you turn so bad?

EDDIE

I don't know, honey. I didn't mean to. I guess I just got stuck. But I want to change. I'll get help. Professional help. Take me back, would you?

MS. TABOR

Why would I take you back, Eddie? Tell me why.

HOYTE

Beth Anne, this is Irving Hoyte again. We don't have much time. We have to resolve this situation quickly. I can assure you --

MS. TABOR

Shut up, Hoyte! We've got business to take care of in here.

EDDIE

It looks like you need help now too.

MS. TABOR

I don't need help. I'll get the chair for sure.

EDDIE

They don't use the chair anymore.

MS. TABOR

Oh, no?

EDDIE

Lethal injection. But we can get you life or less. I know we can.

MS. TABOR

Think so?

EDDIE

Trust me, baby. Now, the sooner you show remorse, the better. So put the gun down.

MS. TABOR

You think they've got an orthodontist in prison?

EDDIE

Sure they do, honey. (*She lowers the gun to her side.*) That's right, honey. That's a good girl. (*In a flash, he reaches behind his back and pulls a pistol from the waist of his jeans.*) And now you're goin' down!

MS. TABOR

What?! What are you talking about?

EDDIE

You've made my life a living hell. (*Mimicking.*) "Why don't you get a job?" "Why don't you quit drinkin'?" "Why don't you try to get a welding certificate?"

MS. TABOR

You bastard!

EDDIE

Don't even think of raising that gun at me!

MS. TABOR

You sneak! You're such a cheating, sneaky, conniving sneak!

EDDIE

You want to know what went wrong? This country did. A white, godfearing male person in this country don't stand a chance. No, you only get a chance if you're a black or a gay or a cripple or a *woman with braces!* Beth Anne, *you* got a better chance of getting a welding certificate than I do! But that ends right now. Don't you see how great this is? I get to shoot you *and* be a hero.

MS. TABOR

You had this all planned?

EDDIE

As in premeditated? No, I didn't. See, I've been sitting up in that tree for weeks trying to figure out how to do you in without doing time. And when all this came down, it hit me like a bolt of thunder.

MS. TABOR

Lightning!

EDDIE

You're right, Beth Anne, we're thinkers here in Oregon.

MS. TABOR

You risked getting your own head blown off --?

EDDIE

I knew you wouldn't hurt me.

MS. TABOR

You asshole! Of course I would!

EDDIE

No you wouldn't. Because you love me too damn much. Don't you, honeybunch?

MS. TABOR

I'll honeybunch you!

She raises her gun. The students scream. Blackout. Two simultaneous shots. Pause. Lights rise. Two more students lie dead on the floor.

EDDIE

Wow. We're really bad shots.

MS. TABOR

I've been taking lessons.

EDDIE

Looks like you need a few more.

MS. TABOR

Look who's talking!

Their eyes lock. They laugh.

EDDIE

Aw, honey. Maybe this is a sign.

MS. TABOR

Yeah? A sign of what?

EDDIE

That we were made for each other.

MS. TABOR

That we *deserve* each other, you mean.

EDDIE

Maybe that's it. Let's shoot our way out. How many rounds you got?

MS. TABOR

Oh, a few. How about you?

EDDIE

We'll see.

MS. TABOR

Kiss me, you asshole.

They go to each other, skipping past the windows. When it looks like they'll kiss, they both raise their guns. They wrestle. Blackout. Two simultaneous shots. Pause. Lights rise. The two remaining students lie dead on the floor. Eddie and Ms. Tabor gawk, then laugh.

I believe it is a sign. Why don't we give the justice system a try. What do you say?
(*Eddie shrugs. They toss their weapons out the window.*) We surrender!

DEPUTY

Come to the window with your hands behind your head.

They go to separate windows, hands behind their heads.

EDDIE

We'd like to express our remorse.

MS. TABOR

But we're not admitting guilt!

HOYTE

I assure you, you'll be treated with the utmost fairness by the State of Oregon.

Ms. Tabor and Eddie stand a moment, then reach out and join hands. Fade.

End of Play