

-JASON . . . OR "ONE DAY AT TIME"-

A Behavior Report by Johnmichael Rossi

CHARACTERS

JASON, the boy
JAY, a character
MOM, Jason's mother
DAD, Jason's father
GRANDMA, Jason's grandmother
BRAD, a friend
BOBBY, another friend
NADINE, the girl
LORRAINE, Bobby's girl
LAZY LARRY, the drummer
MR. CHECKONYA, the principal
MZ. AGAINSTYA, the new principal
SECRETARY, Mz. Againstya's secretary
BAND TEACHER, the band teacher

\ > to be played by the
/ same actor

SETTING:

The framework of Jason's bedroom. Walls should be translucent so that action can be played in and around the room. All of the scenes take place here, as Jason's bedroom will represent the various locations throughout the play. There should be a window frame, that is practical as well as a door frame without a door.

TIME: Now or "One Day at a Time"

NOTES:

*The role of JASON should be played by a child close to the age of the part. All other roles, whether they are adults or children, should be played by adults in order to create the larger-than-life world that exists through JASON's eyes. The role of JAY, present in each scene, one way or another, should also age within each scene.

**The roles of MZ. AGAINSTYA, SECRETARY and BAND TEACHER are played by the same actor and each character should be starkly different and a clear commentary on the fact that the roles are being played by the same actor.

***The occasional appearance of an asterisk (*) in the middle of a speech indicates that the next speech begins to overlap at that point.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

JASON, full of energy with a baseball bat and glove in hand, runs onto stage and into his room. The company is throughout the stage. They collectively shout "Jason!" JASON freezes. The stage clears except MR. CHECKONYA and MZ. AGAINSTYA. MOM and DAD are off to the side, "on deck." JAY is present and is always in some way present in each scene. The scene begins.

CHECKONYA

In the old doghouse again Jason.

JASON

But, Mister Check*onya . . .

CHECKONYA

I know. I know. What didn't you do this time, Jason?

JASON

I called out the answer without raising my hand.

CHECKONYA

Jason. How many times have we gone through this.

JASON

No one else knew the answer.

CHECKONYA

Jason. There are rules. And rules must be followed. Everywhere you go in the world, there are rules. You must learn how to follow rules in order to get by*. Otherwise you'll end up in the doghouse for the rest of your life.

JASON

But Missus Carry never calls on me. She hates me.

CHECKONYA

And Jason. You can't keep relying on me to check up on you. Speaking of which. Meet Mz. Againstya. Mz. Againstya will be taking over for me.

JASON

Taking over?

CHECKONYA

Why yes. I thought I told you. I'm retiring*. Mz. Againstya is your new principal.

(CHECKONYA exits)

JASON

Retiring?

AGAINSTYA

I've heard a lot about you, Jason. I understand that your sister was last year's valedictorian. Is that right?

JASON

AGAINSTYA

Jason. I asked you a question.

JASON

Will Mister Checkonya be coming back?

AGAINSTYA

Jason. Mister Checkonya is gone. He has retired. Now. I was talking to your teacher, Missus Carry about your habit of calling out all of the time, and this seems to be a recurring problem* with you. She says you always disturb the class. You never raise your hand. Always calling out. Now this behavior is not what I like to hear about. Disturbing the class, instigating your peers . . .

JASON

Missus Carry just doesn't like me.

AGAINSTYA

We've decided that the best thing for you would be to keep you on a behavior sheet.

(AGAINSTYA hands JASON the "behavior sheet" and exits; the entire cast from offstage shouts out loud "A behavior sheet?" MOM and DAD step into the light)

MOM

I just don't get it*. I just don't get it.

DAD

Can't you just stay out of trouble for one day Jason?

MOM

You're so well-behaved at home. What happens* to you once you get to school?

DAD

A behavior sheet! What the hell is a behavior sheet anyway?

JASON

I think they made it up.

MOM

Jason. This isn't funny. Mz. Againstya said that if you don't stay on your best behavior, that you'll be in danger of not getting promoted* to the third grade. Is that what you want?

DAD

Not getting promoted!

JASON

No. I hate the second grade. I can't wait to move on to the third.

DAD

Well, it's not going to happen if you don't start obeying the rules.

JASON

So I guess this wouldn't be a good time to ask you guys if I can join the Little League team?

MOM

Jason!

DAD

We've been through this a thousand times*. We can't afford to pay for you to be in Little League.

JASON

But . . .

DAD

Besides, you can still play ball at the park with your friends. You don't need to be in Little League to play baseball.

JASON

But Brad and Bobby are both in Little League and I'll be the only one who's not.

DAD

Jason. This is not an issue. We can't afford it right now. The issue is if you're going to be able to behave yourself* well enough to stay out of Missus Carry's hair.

MOM

I just don't get it. He's so good here at home. So quiet. Do you think they're using him as a scapegoat?

DAD

Who?

MOM

The teachers. That new principal. Againstya. I don't know about her.

DAD

(JASON starts to exit; GRANDMA
is seen outside of the room,
in the window frame)

Either way. The kid has a behavior sheet now*, whatever that means.

MOM

Jason. Where are you going?

JASON

To finish writing my story.
(exits)

DAD

Him and his stories.

MOM

He loves writing*. Why do you suppose he gets in so much trouble?

JASON

(in the window frame with
GRANDMA)

Grandma . . . I wish you could see.

SCENE TWO

JASON enters the room with his baseball bat and glove. He violently drops them to the floor and begins to throw his ball in what appears to be a fit of anger. JAY interjects.

JAY
Whoa . . . whoa kid. Take it easy there.

JASON

JAY
What's the matter?

JASON

JAY
What happened?

JASON

JAY
Okay. If you're not going to talk, I'll leave . . .
(starts to make his way)

JASON

You can't leave!

JAY

Sure I can.

JASON

No you can't. You're me. You can't go anywhere.

JAY

Not if you don't finish your book I can't. I'll just be stuck on those pages forever.

JASON

I'm almost done.

JAY

You have the beginning and then the end. That's not done.

JASON

The ending is going to be great! I have a new ending!

JAY

You always have a new ending. Every day. Why don't you work on *getting* to the end.

JASON

Well that's easy. You get there with your time machine.

JAY

I know I get there in the time machine . . . but you keep rushing to the end.

JASON

Because that's the best part.

JAY

How little you know.

JASON

Besides I can spend all day working on my story now that I won't be joining Little League.

JAY

Oh is that why the big dramatic entrance?

JASON

Well that and my behavior sheet.

JAY

You're on a behavior sheet?

JASON

Yeah.

JAY

What's that?

JASON

Shouldn't you know these things? You're me. It has happened to you already.

JAY

What are you doing?

JASON

I'm going to work on the story. You want a middle so bad.
(fade to black)

SCENE THREE

JASON, BRAD and BOBBY are having a casual ball toss in the room. LORRAINE enters. BOBBY and LORRAINE exchange a kiss. BOBBY and LORRAINE exit holding hands as BRAD and JASON watch.

BRAD

Yeah so that sucks that your parents won't let you join.

JASON

Who was she?

BRAD

Maybe we can save up some money* so you can join next season.

JASON

Is she Bobby's . . . girlfriend?

BRAD

What? Oh. Yeah. Lorraine. I think so.

JASON

Wow.

BRAD

Yeah, she comes and watches all of our games and cheers for Bobby whenever he's at bat. So I guess she's his girlfriend.

JASON

And they kiss.

BRAD

Yeah.

JASON

BRAD

Hey! After school today, do you want to come to the park to play baseball. We're putting together a game against Kenny and the kids on his block.

JASON

Can I?

BRAD

Yeah. Not all of those kids are Little Leaguers so it shouldn't be a problem. We'll go straight from school.

JASON

Great! Oh. Wait. I'll meet you guys there.

BRAD

Why?

JASON

I have to report to Mz. Againstya's office at the end of the day.

BRAD

What for?

JASON

This stupid thing I gotta do.

BRAD

What thing?

JASON

(BRAD starts to exit as
SECRETARY enters)

I need to show her my behavior sheet.

SECRETARY

Ohhhh. Yesssss. The behaviorrrr sheeeeeet. You must be Jaaaaason. You'll have to wait. Mz. Againstya is in a meeeeeting. Take a seaaaaat.

(exits; JASON takes a seat next
to NADINE who has entered
during this exchange)

JASON

Hi.

NADINE

Hi.

JASON

What's that.

NADINE

It's my flute.

JASON

You're flute? It looks like a gun case.

NADINE

It's my flute. I play the flute. I'm going to join the school band.

JASON

Really? Me too.

NADINE

You are? What do you play?

JASON

Play? Oh. I uhhh . . . the uhhh . . . the . . . drums. I play the drums*! I'm a drummer.

NADINE

Really?

JASON

Well my father plays the drums. And I want to play like him.

NADINE

I'm Nadine.

JASON

I'm Jason.

NADINE

I'm new here. My mom is meeting Mz. Againstya to fill out the paper work. Why are you here?

JASON

Oh me? I just . . . need to get Mz. Againstya to sign something . . . for this . . . uhhh . . . thing.

NADINE

Oh.

JASON

Hey. Do you want to be my girlfriend?

NADINE

You're what?

JASON

My girlfriend.

NADINE

No.

JASON

Why not?

NADINE

I hardly know you.

JASON

We seem to be getting along.

NADINE

Besides, my Aunt Madeline says that boys are nothing but trouble and that the last thing I want is a relationship with a boy.

JASON

Sounds like your Aunt Madeline doesn't like boys.

NADINE

She says that I'm better off without them.

JASON

(goes to kiss NADINE)

NADINE

What are you doing?

JASON

I was going to kiss you. That's what boyfriends and girlfriends do.

NADINE

Today's my first day in this neighborhood *and* in this school. I think that's enough firsts for one day.

(both exit)

SCENE FOUR

JASON storms back into the room, frustrated. He's carrying a trombone case and tosses it to the floor.

JAY

Hey chief.

JASON

Life sucks!

JAY

Another optimistic prophecy from my great author. What's that?

JASON

A trombone.

JAY

Cool.

JASON

No . . . not cool. I'm supposed to play the drums.

JAY

And why are you "supposed" to play the drums.

JASON

Because that's what I told Nadine and now she's going to see me in band class tomorrow with this stupid trombone and she's going to think that I'm a big fat liar.

JAY

Who's Nadine?

JASON

My future wife.

JAY

You're future wife?

JASON

Which reminds me. I've got a new ending for the story.

JAY

Let me guess. It has something to do with you going to the future and meeting your wife, Nadine.

JASON

Don't forget about the kids.

JAY

The kids? Does she know about these kids?

JASON

She will.

JAY

Is that before or after she finds out you play the trombone and not the drums.

JASON

I don't play the trombone.

JAY

You might as well play something if you can't play the drums. Why did you tell her you were playing the drums anyway?

JASON

Because I was supposed to play the drums. But Band Teacher doesn't like me and gave the drums to Lazy Larry*. Lazy Larry is going to be terrible on the drums.

JAY

Ah yes. Lazy Larry.

JASON

He can't even walk straight.

JAY

Well. It looks like you're stuck with the trombone.

JASON

No.

JAY

No?

JASON

No.

JAY

Well. What are you going to play?

JASON

I'm going to play the drums.

JAY

Jason . . .

JASON

That will be a great ending* . . . twenty five years into the future! I'm a famous drummer married to Nadine with two kids.

JAY

Jason . . .

JASON

And a dog.

JAY

Jason . . .

JASON

And three houses. And then the ending to the ending can be thirty years later when my famous band has a reunion.

JAY

You're going to have me six feet under in no time with all of these endings.

JASON

And my great grandchildren*. They'll be rich because of me.

JAY

Hey kid. Slow down.

JASON

And the ending to *that** ending can be when we have a great comeback.

JAY

That's it. I'm gone. I'm leaving. Last chance to slow down. Okay. Goodbye.

(exits officially for the first
time; JASON starts writing up
a storm)

SCENE FIVE

A large bass drum is in the room. JASON eyes it for a while. Picks up his trombone and takes his seat as BRAD, BOBBY, LORRAINE, LAZY LARRY, NADINE and BAND TEACHER enter. JAY is not present.

BAND TEACHER

(almost singing obnoxiously
throughout the scene)

Roll! Call! Nadine! Brad! Bobby! Lorraine! Larry! Okay!

JASON

I'm here too Band Teacher.

BAND TEACHER

Oh. Yes. Yes you are. Jason. Good. Trombone. Now, has everyone practiced their instruments since we last met? We shall start with the drum section. Larry.

(an offstage snare drum roll of
anticipation; LAZY LARRY hits
the drum with his stick and
the drum falls apart)

Larry! What are you doing?

(the class giggles)

LAZY LARRY

I . . . I . . .

BAND TEACHER

You've broken the drum!

LAZY LARRY

I . . . I . . .

BAND TEACHER

What do you have to say for yourself?

LAZY LARRY

Jason did it.

JASON

What? I was all the way over here!

LAZY LARRY

He was in the class way before any of us*. I saw him staring at the drum. He must have done something to it.

JASON

That's a lie.

BAND TEACHER

Jason. Sit down.

LAZY LARRY

Everyone knows he wanted to play the drums and not the trombone.

JASON

You're a liar!

(LAZY LARRY and JASON get closer and closer)

LAZY LARRY

Am not.

JASON

Am too.

LAZY LARRY

Am not.

JASON

Am too.

LAZY LARRY

Am not.

JASON

Am too.

LAZY LARRY

Am too.

JASON

Am not.

LAZY LARRY

Ha!

(JASON violently pushes LAZY LARRY; LAZY LARRY falls to the floor into NADINE; her flute crashes to the floor)

NADINE

Jason!

(the entire cast has joined the stage surrounding JASON and they all shout out "Jason!"; JAY stands off to the side, extremely old with a suitcase in hand)

JAY

Jason.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

JASON, BOBBY and BRAD on the ball field. The entire cast shouts "Jason!" The play resumes.

BRAD

What were you doing* out there?

BOBBY

You can't just skip over second and third base and run home. Don't you know how the game works.

JASON

But guys I made it home and scored a run.

BRAD

That's cheating.

BOBBY

Not scoring a run. Don't you know the rules of the game?

JASON

Well . . .

BRAD

He's not in Little League.

BOBBY

That's not my fault. Our game here can't suffer cuz he don't know the rules. And that's another thing Jason*. You never get any hits!

JASON

What?

BOBBY

Never! You just swing at everything that comes to you.

JASON

The ball comes to me and I swing.

BOBBY

And you miss. Patience at the plate. Don't you know anything.

(LORRAINE enters; BOBBY and LORRAINE kiss and they exit)

BRAD

Sorry Jason.

JASON

Where are you going?

BRAD

To finish the game.

JASON

Oh. Well okay!

BRAD

No Jason. The guys have decided that you can't play with us anymore. You don't know the game well enough.

(exits)

SCENE TWO

JASON drops his bat and glove to the floor. He looks around the room. There is no sign of JAY. JASON goes to his book. He looks inside. Tries shaking it. Still no sign of JAY. Has he really gone this time?

JASON

Jay? Jay? Jay! This isn't funny Jay. Where are you? Come out! Jay! The guys at school won't let me play ball with them. They said I don't know the game well enough. All because I couldn't join Little League. And Nadine won't talk to me. Her flute is broken. All because of Lazy Larry! Jay. I'm in big trouble. Report cards are next week. If I get a U in behavior I'm stuck in the second grade. Forever. Jay! Where are you? This isn't funny anymore. Jay! Jay! Jay!!!!!!!!!!!!

(a long pause; JASON gets his book; he sits down with it as the entire cast starts to sing the baseball tune: "BUM BUM BUM BUM . . ." etc.)

SCENE THREE

The baseball tune continues into the scene. JASON steps up to bat. MZ. AGAINSTYA enters and starts up the game. GRANDMA stands off to the side and watches the game.

AGAINSTYA

Okay everyone! Mathematics time! One plus one equals.
(all raise their hand)

JASON

I know this! No wait. Patience at the plate Jason.

GRANDMA

Ball one.

AGAINSTYA

Lorraine.

LORRAINE

Uhhh . . . three.

JASON

Three! How stupid! It's . . . patience at the plate. Don't call out.

AGAINSTYA

Jason. Were you about to call out just now.

JASON

No Mz. Againstya.

AGAINSTYA

Do you want to call out Jason.

JASON

No Mz. Againstya. Thank you.

GRANDMA

Ball two!

AGAINSTYA

Well then. In that case. Bobby. One plus one.

JASON

Bobby's so bad in math.

BOBBY

Six!

AGAINSTYA

Wrong. Jason. Are you sure you don't want to just call out the answer.

JASON

No thank you Mz. Againstya.

GRANDMA

Ball three.

AGAINSTYA

Okay then. One plus one. Brad.

JASON

Ughh. Brad's even worse in math than Bobby.

AGAINSTYA

What was that Jason? Was that a "call out."

JASON

No Mz. Againstya.

AGAINSTYA

Are you sure?

JASON

Yes Mz. Againstya.

AGAINSTYA

Wouldn't you like to call out and disturb the class? You do it so well, Jason.

(a long pause)

JASON

No.

BRAD

Four hundred and ninety-two!

GRANDMA

Ball four.

(the entire cast shouts "You Walk"; JASON is handed his trombone and he begins to play the trombone as he "walks" to first base where BAND TEACHER waits for him; JASON plays a rendition of "Take me out to the Ballgame" on his trombone; he gets to first)

BAND TEACHER

Excellent! You have come quite a long way on the trombone Jason . . . looks like you have a future with the bone my friend.

(CHECKONYA returns to coach
JASON at first base)

CHECKONYA

Just make sure you stay out of the doghouse kid.

JASON

Mr. Checkonya*! You're back!

CHECKONYA

Shhh . . . you're doing just fine kid. Just pay attention.

(CHECKONYA hands him his book;
JASON begins writing in his
book as he "walks" to second
base where JAY waits for him)

JAY

Whatchya got there kid?

JASON

Jay! You're back.

JAY

Perhaps.

JASON

I wrote the middle!

JAY

I know. That's how I came back.

JASON

Jay. I'm sorry I rushed to the end*. I Really missed you.

JAY

Don't worry about any of that kid. You've got a game to play here. Take this. You'll need it.

(JAY hands him some yellow
wrapping paper; JASON wraps
the book up as he "walks" to
third where NADINE waits)

JASON

Here. This is for you.

NADINE

Thank you.

JASON

I'm sorry about your flute.

NADINE

It's okay. Nothing really happened to it anyway.
Besides. I like the flute but what I really want to do is
sing!

JASON
Well I'm sure you're a great singer.

NADINE
Thanks.

JASON
Open your gift!

NADINE
What is it?

JASON
You'll see. Open it!
(NADINE starts to open the
package)
It's the book I wrote.

NADINE
You wrote a book? You didn't tell me you wrote books.

JASON
It's my first!
(NADINE kisses JASON)
Score!
(the entire cast shouts "Not
Yet"; GRANDMA is nearby and
hands him his report card)
Report card. Oh no.
(he begins slowly walking home)

AGAINSTYA
Mathematics

MOM
E.

AGAINSTYA
Language Arts.

DAD
E.

AGAINSTYA
Science.

MOM
E.

AGAINSTYA
Social studies.

E. DAD

Behavior. AGAINSTYA
(a long pause)

S. MOM & DAD
(JASON steps on home; everyone starts to cheer and celebrate)

We win! We win! BRAD

You did it. BOBBY

Wait a minute! Wait a minute! JASON
(everyone stops)
An S? Satisfactory? That's it? It's not a U but still,
it's not an E?
(the entire cast shouts out
"Jason!")

One day at a time. GRANDMA

The End.