

# The Crank Calls

By John Moore



## No. 1: “CRITICAL MASS”

(The time for all plays is long ago, the place suburban Arvada, the locale the kitchen table that at meal time could accommodate an army of pre-pubescent smart-asses).

### CHARACTERS:

Mike, 15

Dan, 12

Kevin, 11

Pre-Scary Man, 10

DAN (hangs up phone): Nope. Woman.

KEVIN (perusing phone book): Try this: 422-6452...  
Larry Loomis.

DAN (dials number, lowers voice): Yes, is this Mr. Loomis? Larry Loomis?

VOICEOVER: It is.

DAN: Yes, Mr. Loomis, this is the city sewer company ...

VOICEOVER: The what?

DAN: Yes, that’s right, the city sewer company ... Mr. Loomis, we’ve been monitoring our levels and gauges here at the plant, and it appears that we have reached something of a critical mass...

VOICEOVER: I don’t understand.

DAN: The readings are much, much higher than normal, Mr. Loomis. In fact, we’ve reached a maximum storage capacity, and there could be serious consequences for the entire city unless immediate action is taken. Now, upon further investigation it appears that the problem is originating from your address.

VOICEOVER: I’m not sure I’m following ...

KEVIN: (whispering) 6147 Dover St....

DAN: You do reside at 6147 Dover Street, don’t you?

VOICEOVER: Yes, but ...

DAN: Well, simply put, Mr. Loomis, we’ve had just about enough shit out of you!

(DAN hangs up and the threesome breaks into hysterical fit of infantile laughter)...

## No 2: “DIXIE”

KEVIN: Is John there?

VOICE 1: Yeah, hold on a second.

(KEVIN hangs up phone.)

KEVIN: Crap!

DAN: What?

KEVIN: There was one!

DAN (perusing phone book): It happens. Try this: 421-7356... Richard Clarkson.

(KEVIN dials number.)

VOICE 2: Hello?

KEVIN: Um, yes, hello, is John there?

VOICE 2: You got the wrong number, little dude.

KEVIN: What, seriously?

VOICE 2: Seriously.

KEVIN: So there’s no John there?

VOICE 2: That’s the truth.

KEVIN: So you are saying there is no John there?

VOICE 2: Nope.

KEVIN: No John. Not in your entire house?

VOICE 2: I would know.

KEVIN: Well then what the hell do you pee in -- a Dixie cup?

(KEVIN hangs up. DAN, KEVIN and LITTLE SCARY MAN fall onto the floor in uncontrollable fits of laughter...)

### **No. 3: "GRANDMA?"**

DAN (hangs up phone): No answer.

KEVIN (perusing phone book): Crap. OK, try this: 422-2932... It's listed as "M. O'Brien."

(DAN dials number.)

VOICE: Hello?

(DAN hangs up.)

DAN: Nope. Man.

KEVIN (perusing phone book): Crap. Aha, here: 424-8630... "Mary Gartland."

(DAN dials number.)

DAN: Little scary man, you ready?

LITTLE SCARY MAN (sadly): Yeah, I guess so.

OLD WOMAN: Hello?

DAN: Well, you better be. This is it! C'mere.

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Do you guys ever get the feeling that we're wasting our lives?

DAN: Shut up and cry.

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Oh, all right.

OLD WOMAN: Hello?

DAN: Hey! A little enthusiasm? (DAN winds up and smacks his little brother square on the shoulder.)

LITTLE MAN: Owwww! Hey, that hurt (starts to cry).

DAN: That's the point (hands the phone to LITTLE SCARY MAN). Don't fuck it up.

OLD WOMAN: Is anyone there? Hello?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: (still crying) Grandma?

OLD WOMAN: Excuse me?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Hi Grandma, it's me.

OLD WOMAN: I'm sorry, it's who?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: It's me, grandma ... (crying) ... Tommy.

OLD WOMAN: I'm sorry, little boy; I think you have the wrong number.

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Grandma, come pick me up!

OLD WOMAN: But I ...

LITTLE SCARY MAN: It hurts so bad, grandma, and ...

OLD WOMAN: Are you crying?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Yeah, grandma. I'm crying.

OLD WOMAN: Well, calm down, young man, and tell me what happened to you.

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Daddy beat mommy again.

OLD WOMAN: What? Your father --

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Yeah daddy beat mommy up pretty good this time. She's bleeding...

OLD WOMAN: Bleeding?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Her eyes were all purple and yellow, grandma --

OLD WOMAN: How awful—

LITTLE SCARY MAN: And then daddy beat me, and I'm all bleeding too and ...

OLD WOMAN: How old are you, Tommy?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: You know how old I am grandma, so I ran away as fast as I could and now come pick me up grandma ... pleeeeeease ....

OLD WOMAN: But Tommy, I want you to listen to me carefully. I am not your grandmother...

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Don't say that grandma!

OLD WOMAN: But it's true!

LITTLE SCARY MAN: I think mommy's eye is going to fall out...

OLD WOMAN: Oh dear God!

LITTLE SCARY MAN: ... And I lost another tooth.

OLD WOMAN: Your father took out your tooth?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: And then I ran down to the corner to call you like always and and ...

OLD WOMAN: Oh my God, you poor ...

LITTLE SCARY MAN: And as I was running down the street he said if I didn't stop and come back that he would go back in and kill mommy but I just kept going and --

OLD WOMAN: Dear God, we have to call the police!

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Just come pick me up like you always do Grandma – I'm in the usual spot.

OLD WOMAN: You mean this has happened before?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: You know daddy's a bad man grandma. And I haven't even seen Jimmy in over three weeks now and ...

OLD WOMAN: Tommy .... Tell me ... WHO'S JIMMY?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: You know who Jimmy is, grandma. He's your grandson too, and --

OLD WOMAN (now frantic): Now listen to me, Tommy. I'm trying to tell you, I'm not your grandma. You dialed the wrong number and you got me by mistake and --

LITTLE SCARY MAN (really starts to wail): That's not a very nice thing to say grandma. I'm cold and I'm all bleeding! And now you won't be my grandma?

OLD WOMAN: Oh heaven help me. Tell me exactly where you are Tommy, I'll call the police...

LITTLE SCARY MAN: No! Daddy says never call the police or else, grandma. I don't want the police, grandma. I want you!

OLD WOMAN: Of course I will come for you Tommy. Just tell me where you are!

LITTLE SCARY MAN: You know where I am, grandma. At the gas station, like always.

OLD WOMAN: But what gas station, Tommy? What do the street signs say?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Well ... one looks like it says "Ral...ston?"

OLD WOMAN: OK, good. Great. What does the other one say?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: I think it says ... Carr...

OLD WOMAN: Thank goodness, I know exactly where that is. Now Tommy, you stay put. I am going to get down there just as fast as I can...

LITTLE SCARY MAN: I love you grandma. I'm starting to feel dizzy!

OLD WOMAN: Oh you poor child. Now you stay out on the corner where I can spot you.

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Oh no!

OLD WOMAN: What is it, Tommy?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: Oh god, it's him!

OLD WOMAN: Who? What?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: It's him grandma. I see Daddy! He's coming after me!

OLD WOMAN: Oh, dear ...

LITTLE SCARY MAN: And he looks so mad, grandma. He looks like the devil. And grandma ...???

OLD WOMAN: Yes, Tommy. What is it?

LITTLE SCARY MAN: He's got a hammer in his hand!

OLD WOMAN: Ahh! Tommy, now you listen to me. I want you to run, little boy. Do you hear me? I'm on my way. I'll be there in 10 minutes. But right now I need you to run, Tommy. Do you hear me? RUN!!!

LITTLE SCARY MAN: He's right here grandma. And he's waving that hammer and ..... Aaaaaaaaagggggghhhh-hhh!!!!

(LITTLE SCARY MAN hangs up the phone)...

DAN, KEVIN and LITTLE SCARY MAN fall onto the floor in uncontrollable fits of laughter ....

## END OF PLAY

### No. 4: "THAT AIN'T FUNNY"

DAN (hangs up phone): Nope. Woman.

KEVIN (perusing phone book): OK, try this: 424-7562... The Colters.

(DAN dials number.)

VOICE: Hello?

(DAN hangs up.)

DAN: Woman.

KEVIN: Dammit. That's four straight. (perusing phone book) Try this: 421-0475... The Lemanskys.

(DAN dials number.)

MAN'S VOICE: Hello.

DAN: Hey dad it's me. Come pick me up.

MAN'S VOICE: I'm sorry. Who is this?

DAN: It's me, dad. Dance class is over. Come pick me up.

MAN'S VOICE: I think there's been a mistake.

DAN: Stop fooling around, dad. It's cold out here.

MAN'S VOICE: Young man, you must have dialed the wrong number. I'm not your father.

DAN (confused): What, are you serious?

MAN'S VOICE: I'm quite sure.

DAN: Are you kidding me here dad?

MAN'S VOICE: I assure you, I'm not. You try again now, and good luck finding --

DAN: No wait, wait wait, mister. Don't hang up.

MAN'S VOICE: What can I do for you?

DAN: Well, it's just that I'm in a pay phone, and I just used up my last dime.

MAN'S VOICE: Well, that is a pickle.

DAN (Getting excited): Oh my gosh, I don't know how I'm going to get home ...

MAN VOICE: Well I'm sure that ...

DAN: If I don't have another dime, then I can't call my dad, and he can't pick me up ... (starts to cry).

MAN'S VOICE: Now calm down there, young man...

DAN: WAAAAAAH!

MAN'S VOICE: Now, really, there's no need for that!

DAN: I'm never going to get home!!!!!! Never!!!

MAN'S VOICE: Son, take a deep breath. I CAN HELP YOU.

DAN: You can?

MAN'S VOICE: Of course I can. Everything will be fine.

DAN: So you'll come pick me up?

MAN'S VOICE: Well, no, but I'll call your father for you and tell him your dance practice is over and to come pick you up. You see? Problem solved!

DAN: (calms himself): Hey ... that just might work!

MAN'S VOICE: Of course it will work, son, now you just give me your phone number.

DAN: Yeah, yeah yeah it's 424-6384...

MAN'S VOICE: That's 424-6384?

DAN: Yeah.

MAN'S VOICE: Well that's odd. That's nowhere close to the number you d---

DAN: Yeah, tell him that dance class is over and that I'm at the pay phone on the corner. He knows where it is.

MAN'S VOICE: OK, fine. You hang tight young man, and your father will soon be on his way.

DAN: Hey thanks mister, you're a lifesaver.

MAN'S VOICE: My pleasure son, and you have a nice day.

DAN: Yeah thanks, and you too mister.

(DAN hangs up, and the three boys bust out laughing. KEVIN runs over to a door leading off-stage and calls out ...)

KEVIN: Hey Mike, we're ready for you.

MIKE: Fuck yourself.

KEVIN: C'mon Mike, he's gonna be calling any minute!

(After a pause, MIKE emerges. He's big and burly for his age, with straggly hair covering his face and a post-pubescent deepness to his voice).

MIKE: Dance class?

KEVIN AND DAN: Yeah. Hahahaha!!!

MIKE: Fine (phone rings, MIKE clears throat, picks up, speaks deeply) ... Hello?

MAN'S VOICE: Oh, yes, hello, sir, my name is ... Frank Lemansky .... and it's the darndest thing, but I just got a call from your son ...

MIKE: You ... just got a call ... from my son?

MAN'S VOICE: Yes, you see, it seems he misdialed while he was trying to call you from the pay phone and he got me instead ...

MIKE: Is that right?

MAN'S VOICE: Yes, he was calling to tell you that he's ready for his ride home from dance class. But it was his last dime so he couldn't ...

MIKE: Hold up, sir. Now let me get this straight ...

MAN'S VOICE: OK, yes, then, fine --

MIKE: You're telling me that my son just called you...

MAN'S VOICE: That's right.

MIKE: From a pay phone?

MAN'S VOICE: That's correct.

MIKE: To ask for a ride home ...

MAN'S VOICE: Yes.

MIKE: From dance class?

MAN'S VOICE: Exactly.

MIKE: Well mister, I don't happen to think that you're very funny ...

MAN'S VOICE: I don't understand....

MIKE: It's pretty cruel of a person to call me up ...

MAN'S VOICE: Well, what, cruel?

MIKE: ... To tell me that my son needs a ride home ...

MAN'S VOICE: Well, he does ...

MIKE: ... From class ...

MAN'S VOICE: That's what he said...

MIKE: From DANCE class ...

MAN'S VOICE: Yes, so?

MIKE: ... WHEN MY KID AIN'T GOT NO LEGS!!!!

(MIKE hangs up the phone. The four fall over themselves in hysterical fits of laughter).