

'Michael'

PLAY SCRIPT

Candidate Number

11222234

Centre Number

8133

**HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ENGLISH EXTENSION COURSE 1 MAJOR WORK
IDENTIFICATION TAG**

Student No.: 11222234 C359

School No.: 8133

Number of Pieces: 1/2

Category and Description: SR 'Michael'

**ATTACH THIS CARD SECURELY TO EACH PART
OF THE PROJECT. HANDLE!**

CAST LIST

Michael	Aspiring professional footballer.
Mother (Mrs Mac)	Michael's mother.
Dad	Michael's father.
Jenna	Michael's girlfriend.
Jarred	Michael's best friend.
Scott	School friend of Jarred and Michael
George	Corrupt member of the school football team.
Coach	Football coach to Jarred and Michael in the school football team.
Scout	Talent scout from professional football club.

Act One

Scene One

Spotlight appears on bare stage.

MICHEAL: Mum! I'm running late for school.

MICHAEL: Mum! Where's my shirt... And I can't find my pants?

MOTHER: They're down here. I just finished ironing them Michael.

MICHAEL: What do ya mean? You had all weekend to do the ironing!!

MOTHER: Excuse me?

MICHAEL: I hate being late.

MOTHER: Have a nice day dear.

MICHAEL: I forgot my lunch.

MOTHER: ehem.

Hurry home.

Blackout

Scene Two

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: How're your legs?

MICHAEL: You reckon it'll make me harder to tackle?

JARRED: Eh... maybe, especially if we grease up before we play.

MICHAEL: I wonder what Jenna will think.

JARRED: I bet she'll love it!

Blackout

Scene Three

Spotlight Appears.

JENNA: Hi Mickey. You were late this morning

MICHAEL: Yeah slept in

JENNA: Really? I hope it did you some good.

MICHAEL: And what is that supposed to mean exactly

JENNA: With all this schoolwork we have right now I just haven't had the time to do anything but study and homework. I hate how everything has to be done at the same time... I don't have a life. We haven't been out in weeks...

MICHAEL: You don't have the time and neither do I. I have extra training.

Blackout

Scene Four

Spotlight appears.

MOTHER: Where have you been?

DAD: Don't start on me woman!

MOTHER: I only meant...

DAD: I know exactly what you meant. Get off my back. What are you blubbering for you stupid woman?

MOTHER: Why do you do it Jim? I wish you wouldn't drink so much.

DAD: I'll knock your...

MICHAEL: DON'T! STOP IT! I can't take anymore.

Blackout

Scene Five

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: Are you ready for training?

MICHAEL: Give me a minute

JARRED: C'mon, it's not cool for the captain to be late to training.

MICHAEL: I'm ready. I'm ready. Let's go!

JARRED: Now that's enthusiasm.

MICHAEL: I'm pumped.

JARRED: For training? It's just fitness tonight, no tackling, no scrums, and no rucks. Just fitness.

MICHAEL: Not everyone is born with your talent. Some of us have to work at it. And work hard.

JARRED: Yeah right. That's why all the scouts are asking Coach for your name and number.

COACH: C'mon Boys. 10 laps. You know the drill.

JARRED: Slave driver.

COACH: Oi Mickey. You're not training for the Olympics.

JARRED: He's pushing it to the limit today

COACH: Problem?

JARRED: Not sure.

COACH: Mick get your arse over here, wanna word.

MICHAEL: What?

COACH: Bit full on. Something I should know about?

MICHAEL: Nah, I'm just trying to be the best I can be. You know what it's like.

COACH: Yeah I do. I also know when enough is enough. Everyone has a limit.

MICHAEL: I'm nowhere near my limit. When I reach it I'll know.

COACH: You don't want to burn out Mick.

MICHAEL: I want to get drafted. I want to play for the rest of my life! That's all I want. Nothing else. Just football.

COACH: If you don't wake up Mick you won't be able to play at all.

Blackout

Scene Six

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: Hi Mrs Mac. Mike in?

MOTHER: Yeah he's upstairs taking a shower...

JARRED: I had better go and hurry him up.

MOTHER: Ah... Jarred. Before you go up I was wondering if I could have a word with you

JARRED: Ah yeah, yeah I guess so.

MOTHER: Look, I might be paranoid, but does everything seem okay with Michael? I've been noticing little things and wondering if he's been okay at school. Are there any problems with his teachers or friends, have you noticed anything?

JARRED: I'm sure he'll be fine Mrs Mac. Michael's always fine. He's probably just a little stressed or worn out, nothing to worry about.

MOTHER: But I am worried Jarred. He's always tired, irritable, agitated, and I don't know why.

JARRED: He had a fight with Jenna at lunch today.

MOTHER: But why? It's not just today Jarred, surely you've noticed. He's been withdrawn and moody like this for a couple of weeks.

JARRED: I don't know.

MOTHER: He used to be so happy Jarred.

JARRED: I know.

MOTHER: I don't know how to help my son.

Blackout

Scene Seven

Spotlight appears.

MOTHER: Have you noticed any changes in Michael lately?

DAD: No, not really.

MOTHER: He's been very moody, withdrawn and volatile. The other day we had an argument over nothing and this morning.

DAD: That's to be expected. Kids and parents will never always agree on everything. It's part of growing up.

MOTHER: No, James, it's more than...

DAD: He's growing into a man!

MOTHER: Look, I know my son. I know Michael and I know there's something wrong. Mothers know these things about their children.

DAD: He's my son too, and I haven't noticed anything unusual or different

MOTHER: Well his friends have.

Blackout

Scene Eight

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: What's up?

MICHAEL: Nothing.

JARRED: I don't know... you haven't been yourself lately, sorta distant?
Edgy?

MICHAEL: I don't know what to tell you. I don't know what to say.

JARRED: You've changed. You're not the same person.

MICHAEL: No! No I haven't. You've been talking to mum haven't you?

JARRED: Yeah a bit. But it doesn't change anything Michael. She's worried
about you. We all are.

MICHAEL: I'm all right! God, what do I have to do to get you guys off my
back and stop nagging me? Give it a rest.

JARRED: Michael you need help. You need to talk to someone. You have
to... talk to me.

MICHAEL: I can't.

JARRED: Let me help you. TALK to me! What are you feeling? What are
you thinking? Why are you...

MICHAEL: I don't know damn it! Leave me.

Blackout

Scene Nine

Spotlight appears.

JENNA: Rich and famous yet?

MICHAEL: Does it look like it?

JENNA: I can see the future, and you will be.

MICHAEL: I'm glad you think so, but it's the scouts that I have to convince. My entire life is in their hands.

JENNA: No it's not. You're in control Michael.

MICHAEL: I've been training hard. I don't know what I'll do if a club doesn't want me.

JENNA: They will. You know they will. You're the best, we know it, they know it and you need to believe it. . We're here to support you, we'll always be here for you.

MICHAEL: Yeah, right. But will I always be here?

JENNA: What did you just say?

Blackout

Scene Ten

Spotlight appears.

DAD: How's it goin' mate? What's doin' kiddo?

MICHAEL: Like you care.

DAD: Hey! If I ask you a question, you answer it.

MICHAEL: Fine. Everything's just fine.

DAD: Well, how's your footy going boy? Score any goals?

MICHAEL: If you'd bothered to turn up you'd know. Where's Mum?

DAD: She's fussing around somewhere. When do we find out if any of them clubs want ya next season?

MICHAEL: Soon Dad, soon.

DAD: So then how's that girl of yours, Jemma?

MICHAEL: It's Jenna. How many times do I have to tell you?

DAD: Jenna, Jenna, I'm sorry. You know I'm an old man. So, how is she?

MICHAEL: She's got the shits with me at the moment.

DAD: Women aye. What's her excuse?

MICHAEL: Reckons I don't pay her enough attention. She's probably right. I really just don't have the time for it now. I mean there's school, homework, footy...

DAD: Maybe you've bitten off more than you can chew? A kid your age shouldn't be stressing over women. Life's for living, take it while you can. You've got to learn to let your hair down. Have some fun kiddo.

MICHAEL: What like you do?

Blackout

Scene Eleven

Spotlight appears.

JENNA: Where's Michael?

JARRED: Who'd know? I saw him earlier, but you can never tell with him these days. He could've gone home, or he could be training.

JENNA: That's all he seems to do. Do you think his mum could be right?

JARRED: What do you mean?

JENNA: Do you think he could be in serious trouble?

JARRED: I hope not but I wouldn't know. Every time I see him it gets harder and harder to think of things to say that won't make him angry, or suspicious. He's just not into conversations at the moment.

JENNA: I think it's more than that, and I know you do too. You're his best friend in the whole world and he won't talk to you. I'm supposed to be his girlfriend and he won't even look at me.

SCOTT: I don't think he can even look at himself.

JENNA: I've tried everything I can think of to pull him up, but it doesn't work.

SCOTT: Maybe he'll snap back once he's secured a position in a professional club. Playing football is all he's ever wanted to do. When he's knows for certain that he can do it for the rest of his life, he might come back.

JARRED: I hope so.

Blackout

Scene Twelve

Spotlight appears.

GEORGE: Oi Mick, I see you've been training pretty hard lately.

MICHAEL: Yeah. So?

GEORGE: So it looks like you've set yourself some pretty high standards Mick.

MICHAEL: Have you got a problem with that George?

GEORGE: No mate. Not at all. All I'm asking is; are you sure you can achieve them?

MICHAEL: With enough hard work I can achieve anything, and I'm working really hard George.

GEORGE: But you're not positive that all this hard work is going to pay off are you?

MICHAEL: Well no, but...

GEORGE: But wouldn't it be great to know without a doubt, that you were the man the clubs were looking for?

MICHAEL: How do you do that?

GEORGE: You'd be the best. The very best you can possibly be.

MICHAEL: I'm trying. That's why I'm training all the time.

GEORGE: That's the problem. You shouldn't have to train at the expense of a life with greater meaning.

MICHAEL: What?

GEORGE: Don't you remember your girlfriend Jenna? She's a real looker. And your best mate Jarred? Good footballer but no future in the game.

MICHAEL: What do you mean no future in the game?

GEORGE: He doesn't have the balls.

MICHAEL: Balls for what? He puts his body on the line...

GEORGE: He's not prepared to do all that it takes. He won't take advice.

MICHAEL: What?

GEORGE: He also thought he wanted to be the best, but he didn't realise what I could offer him, so he is destined to fail. But you...

MICHAEL: What about me?

GEORGE: How bad do you want it Michael? How far are you prepared to go?

MICHAEL: I'd do anything!

GEORGE: That's just what I'd thought you'd say. Here I have the most advanced technology in sport today, and it will only cost you...

MICHAEL: Roids! Oh no mate. I'm not into that sort of stuff.

GEORGE: Oh you are, you just don't know it yet. How do you know until...

MICHAEL: Look I said no! Just leave me alone.

GEORGE: Whatever you say Mickey, whatever you say.

Blackout

Scene Thirteen

Spotlight appears.

JENNA: Hey Mrs Mac.

MOTHER: Oh How are you Jenna? Have you been busy? I haven't seen you for such a long time.

JENNA: Yeah I guess we've all been busy lately.

MOTHER: I really wouldn't know what you've all been up to, Michael hasn't filled me in on all the latest goss.

JENNA: Me either.

MOTHER: Pardon?

JENNA: He's been training hard so he hasn't had the time to fill me in on what's going on either.

MOTHER: But there is something going on, isn't there Jenna?

JENNA: I don't know for sure, but my gut tells me there is. I'm really quite worried Mrs Mac. I feel like there's a big wall between us. I feel he's closing himself off from all of us.

MOTHER: I've felt it too.

Blackout

Scene Fourteen

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: Isn't this great. All the scouts are here, well, over there on the hill. Rumour has it you're the man.

MICHAEL: And who believes in rumours? I don't.

COACH: Mike, I want you to treat this like a normal training session. Stay calm, stay focused and you'll knock 'em dead.

JARRED: Yeah right, after me! Isn't that right Mike?

COACH: Alright boys. We have a big game today. Warm ups.

JARRED: Kick it to me! Kick it to me!

COACH: Knock it off Jarred or I'll sideline you. This is not a time for your bull. You have a game to focus on, do it!

JARRED: Right on Coach.

Blackout

Scene Fifteen

Spotlight appears.

SCOUT: Number seventeen, who's that?

COACH: That's Michael.

SCOUT: He's sharp. Tell me, does he always play this hard?

COACH: He's a very determined young man, and with a little coaching from the right people, I think he'd be a great team player.

SCOUT: Hmm... What about number eleven?

COACH: Jarred. Good player, bit of a clown though.

SCOUT: What if we see seventeen, eleven and twenty two for an extra workout after the game.

COACH: Mike, you've made it through to the next round. Remember what I told you. Stay calm, stay focused, and you'll knock 'em dead.

Blackout

Scene Sixteen

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: He's on fire today.

JENNA: Are you surprised? All he ever does is train.

JARRED: True. Look at him though, he's really pushing it to the max.

GEORGE: Maybe he wouldn't have to push it so far if he'd just listen to the right people.

JARRED: You dickhead. Please tell me you didn't do what I think you did.

JENNA: My God. Michael's not like that, not at all.

GEORGE: It's just an innocent insurance package.

JARRED: Innocent? You know what that shit can do.

GEORGE: Down tiger. You don't have to worry. He didn't take it.

JENNA: I told you, I told you, Michael wouldn't cheat.

JARRED: I can't believe you approached him!

GEORGE: Well a man's got to make a living!

JARRED: You know he's been on edge. I can't believe you. You will get caught one of these days.

GEORGE: Chill out mate. I know when I'm not wanted.

JARRED: Don't call me mate!

JENNA: That guy scares me. I don't trust him one little bit.

JARRED: He's only in it for the money, and of course to get himself ahead with minimal effort and hard work. I can't believe he did it.

JENNA: Thank God Michael stood up to him.

JARRED: George is very manipulative. It would have taken Mike a lot of effort to get rid of him.

JENNA: I don't care as long as he stays away from Michael. He's under enough stress as it is. He shouldn't have to think about steroids and George.

JARRED: No one should. A bloke like that should be...

JENNA: Jarred. Do not finish what you're about to say. He's not worth it.

JARRED: No, but Michael is.

JENNA: I can't wait till this is all over.

JARRED: Neither can he.

Blackout

Scene Seventeen

Spotlight appears.

SCOUT: Okay, so we have Jarred, Michael and Scott. Now boys, I'd like to see how you handle this additional workout. I want you to complete these drills. They will be quick and repetitious, following the game you've just played you will find this a grueling task. It will provide me with the opportunity to further assess your fitness, strength and flexibility. It will also demonstrate your suitability to play at an elite level.

COACH: Just pretend you're at training boys. Listen and do exactly what they ask.

SCOUT: Number twenty-two, Scott. He's got the foundations of a good player. Something tells me he needs another year to fine-tune his skills.

COACH: What about Jarred, number eleven?

SCOUT: He looks fine, great even. I'm just not sure if I have room for a clown.

COACH: Everyone enjoys a laugh once in a while. I've watched him play for the last six years, he knows exactly what to do when the pressure's on.

SCOUT: Michael. Michael looks sensational. I'm a little concerned at how hard he seems to be pushing himself.

COACH: He's committed. He trains hard, he plays hard.

SCOUT: But do you think he's got the stamina to keep working at this pace? Okay, that's it for now. I'll get back to you over the next week. Thanks guys. Jarred, a word.

Blackout

Scene Eighteen

Spotlight appears.

MOTHER: How'd it go?

MICHAEL: I'm going up to have a shower.

MOTHER: Come back Mickey.

DAD: Tell us how you got on.

MICHAEL: I don't know. We did all these extra drills after the game and that's it.

DAD: And?

MICHAEL: Don't call us we'll call you.

MOTHER: What do you think?

MICHAEL: It was strange. They asked to speak to Jarred after the workout.

DAD: What did they want?

MICHAEL: How the hell should I know? Is my name Jarred?

MOTHER: We know you did your best dear, and that's all anyone can ask of you. You'll be fine love.

Blackout

Scene Nineteen

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: Mickey.

MICHAEL: I suppose you're feeling pretty proud of yourself, aye.

JARRED: Huh?

MICHAEL: What did he say? Huh? Did he offer you a deal aye?

JARRED: Michael what are you on about?

MICHAEL: Why did he want to talk to you? What makes you so good?

JARRED: I'm not such a bad player Michael. You're not the only one who knows how to play the game.

MICHAEL: What did they say damn it!

JARRED: I thought you'd be happy for me. I thought this was what we'd always wanted. I know I'd be happy for you.

MICHAEL: Tell me what he said Jarred!

Blackout

Scene Twenty

Spotlight appears.

JARRED: Hi Mrs Mac. Okay if I see Mike?

MOTHER: He's upstairs. I heard you did well in the workout the other afternoon?

JARRED: Not as well as Mike, but I haven't heard anything for certain. What about Mike?

MOTHER: Not yet, but I'm sure we will. Go on up, he'll be pleased to see you.

JARRED: Oh No! Help me! Help me! God somebody help me!

MOTHER: Jesus Jarred, what is it?

JARRED: Oh Mickey, what have you done?

DAD: What the hell's going on? Oh shit. For God's sake Jarred, help me get him down. Get help woman, call 000.

MOTHER: My baby. What has my baby done?

JARRED: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Nothing happened Mickey. I didn't make it Mick. They wanted you. They just wanted you.

DAD: My son. What's happened to our only son?

PARAMEDIC: It's too late. He's gone.

MOTHER: We only talked a little while ago. He smiled at me. My baby. What's happened to my baby?

Blackout

Scene Twenty

Spotlight appears.

VOICEOVER: There's a light that's burning bright for me,
 Calling from a distance, it seduces me.
 I follow the path lit by the flame,
 As this is to be my last Big game.
 There is no fear. I have no dread.
 For the light that burns is within my head.
 My sense of failure leaves me cold,
 There's a heart within me that has no soul.
 I've loved. I've lost. I've done my best.
 I just can't face life's greatest test.
 There's a world of darkness creeping over me,
 And all I want is be set free.
 Release me.

Blackout

HSC ENGLISH EXTENSION COURSE 2

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Independent investigation has had a drastic impact on my major work, strongly influencing the development of the central concepts and contributing to the overall success of the play. The application of various dramatic techniques, dramatic tools and critical evaluation played major roles in the process of composition and the development of my personal play writing skills. My play 'Michael' explores issues confronting Australian youth today and has achieved all the desired outcomes. The dramatic impact of the piece is heightened as a direct result of the skill and techniques learnt through the yearlong process of independent investigation.

Through independent investigation I have learnt how to employ various dramatic techniques, such as dialogue, stage direction, props and set design, to create and develop my play 'Michael'. My greatest concern at writing a play was that I wouldn't be able to convey meaning and substance through the use of dialogue and stage directions alone. I did a lot of reading and practice to help develop this skill. Technical and structural conventions also make a large contribution to the overall effect of the play. The use of a single spotlight in the final scene emphasises the focal point of the scene and broadens its atmosphere.

In an effort to develop my use of dramatic techniques and gain confidence in my ability I utilised dramatic tools, like scene breakdowns, feelings breakdown and stage images. These dramatic tools compliment the use of dramatic techniques and assist in forming a structure or map for the entire play. The scene breakdown and feelings breakdown were probably the two most beneficial tools I gained knowledge of through independent investigation. The scene breakdown is a summary of the plot reduced to one or two lines and clarifies the scene objective and maintains the direction of the play in terms of plot. I set my scenes out on colour-coded cards to assist in the positioning and ordering of scenes. Once the scene breakdown was completed I had a solid framework to follow and refer to. This was particularly useful when I was lost or had writers block, allowing me to continue working even in an uninspired situation.

The "feelings breakdown" is summary of the characters inner life reduced to a small paragraph. It includes details on the status of inter-character relationships and what is happening inside the heart, mind and soul of character. The feelings breakdown works like a flow chart or mind map displaying the vital character notes needed to generate the right atmosphere of the scene. When my feelings breakdown was firmly established I was able to incorporate some of this information into the dialogue of my play and take it to a different level. After further feelings analysis and more readjustment of the dialogue and scene structure, my play began to evolve as a major work to be proud of.

Stage images are rough sketches made of certain scenes of the play and, in most cases, are used to convey the writer's vision to other artists working on different aspects of the play. In my situation I used the stage images to help clarify my own thoughts on many different elements, including stage directions, set design and dramatic action. Mapping out a set design was useful in discovering the limitations of the stage medium and how your characters can work and move within them. The set design and stage directions are complementary, directly influencing each other. In this respect the stage images clarified the actions of my characters and allowed me to grasp a greater understanding of the theatre and the dimensions it can give to a play. Even though I used the absolute minimum amount of stage direction and gave no specific demands for set designs, it was a conscious and informed decision I made in the interests of my play.

This decision to change the format and design of the play was brought about by my uncontrollable desire to write the most precise, detailed and long winded stage directions ever seen in a 25 minute play. As my dialogue flourished and progressed and the pages of stage directions increased, everything became increasingly complicated in my mind rather than becoming more defined and succinct. The stage directions overcrowded the pages and dominated over the dialogue, taking the focus away from the dialogue and the greater meaning behind it. This was not the outcome I was working toward and therefore I decided that, rather than having various different sets and extensive stage directions to complement these sets and scene issues, I would have an acting space - bare and naked. It will be a similar arrangement to that of Shakespeare's plays, where minimal direction is given and there is

only that which is emerging through the dialogue. Should my play ever be produced this dramatic technique would increase the longevity of its life as it opens up the reader, actor and director interpretation and allows the play to 'move with the times.'

The writing process involves constant critical evaluation to allow for improvement and part of this is being able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses within the major work. In my experience, I have found that when writing a play it is very easy to become obsessed with applying all play writing conventions and making the work look substantial. This is when quality is sacrificed. Learning to omit characters, unnecessary stage directions and dialogue and learning not to judge a scene on its length are probably the most valuable skills I acquired through independent investigation.

One of the biggest hurdles I had to overcome was my desire to make every scene a large minimum length of two typed pages. This, I thought, would encourage me to write and help to establish the personalities of my characters quickly. Given the time limitations this was important, as the play had to reach a climax and the dramatic action would only be effective if the characters meant something to the audience. However, I found that the scenes would drag on with little energy or character journey and no scene objective. There was no chemistry between characters and the dialogue was pointless. As the quality of my play began to suffer I found the courage to delete the meaningless and unnecessary dialogue and stage directions. I also found that if I didn't write the scenes in their consecutive order, and tried to follow a train of thought or particular character relationship, the words would come more easily and have a more cohesive affect.

Similarly, the number of characters in the play formed a creative boundary. Too many characters meant too many personalities and inter-character relationships to establish and explore in the 20 – 30 minute time frame. The majority of dialogue would be "polite meaningless words" revealing little of the character's inner life. The large number of introductory scenes required for a large cast would also mean a large number of sets and scene changes, impractical for the stage. For this reason some characters had to be deleted. Working with fewer characters allows for more rapid development of character and plot and clarifies the dramatic point of the play, as a central relationship becomes the focus.

Dialogue was another area that required further consideration. Due to the young intended audience the dialogue needed to be casual, informal and contemporary. The everyday setting of the play also supports this variety of dialogue. Originally I wrote in my everyday casual English but after further independent investigation, I discovered that teenage boys didn't talk like this or on the same subjects. Once again the dialogue had to be modified. However, after the word choice for each character was finalized, the dialogue was more free flowing and easier to write,

The entire concept of my play has changed quite drastically since my proposal was written. At that time I intended to write a play based on three eccentric old people trapped in a nursing home discussing their pasts and reaffirming their identities. However I had a limited knowledge of the old people and what it would be like to experience the events in their past and also didn't think the target audience would be overly interested. Therefore I changed my idea completely. I based my play on a first hand experience and a current issue of modern society, teen suicide. It is not intended or hoped that this play will change the world or the way society operates, but rather that it will increase awareness of its existence in those that see or read it. The play is designed so that people of all ages, backgrounds and intellects can enjoy it and appreciate what it has to offer.

Independent investigation has been crucial to the development of my major work, 'Michael'. I was able to examine some of the issues surrounding youth suicide from the perspective of a young boy Michael, as well as learning how to express myself using a different form of writing. Through independent investigation I have mastered and developed many new skills particular to writing a play, including the use of dramatic techniques, dramatic tools, structural conventions and language features. As these skills developed my major work progressed and evolved as I gained confidence and competency. Through critical evaluation and various editing techniques I produced a major work that achieved all that I intended.

WORD COUNT- 1 500