

Synopsis

Frank the Cop takes place during the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations in 2011. The play opens with the city police commissioner stating that protests will be allowed if they remain peaceful. He also says that police officers are to show restraint and be professional at all times. The scene switches to a police station, where the supervisor repeats the commissioner's orders. Afterward, Officer Frank Sturgis and his partner Tommy prepare for duty. Tommy and a fellow officer, Mike, are ready to use force on the demonstrators, but Frank restates what the commissioner and supervisor had said concerning police behavior.

Frank and Tommy stand and watch as demonstrators pass. An older man stops to rest. Tommy threatens to arrest him unless he continues to move. Frank intervenes, allows the man to rest, and is both courteous and understanding throughout. The scene is captured by a news team and is shown on the evening broadcasts. The following day Frank is reprimanded by the supervisor for showing undue "affection" towards the man. Frank agrees not to act in such a manner again. He is assigned to a desk until the demonstrations have concluded.

The supervisor receives a call from the commissioner and meets with him soon after. The commissioner applauds Frank's behavior, as it helps the police department's image with the public. His idea, in fact, is to make Frank famous with the moniker *Frank the Cop*. He tells the supervisor to have Frank return to duty and act even friendlier with the demonstrators. The supervisor relates the order to Frank, who, in turn, informs his wife, Phyllis. Phyllis is adamantly opposed, as she feels it is not a police officer's duty to be friendly.

Nevertheless, he intends to follow the commissioner's instructions. The following day Frank is high-fiving and taking pictures with the demonstrators. All chant "Go Frank go" as Frank dances wildly to a beat provided by a bongo player. Tommy looks on in disgust.

Frank is interviewed at a local television station, where he states that police need to be courteous at all times. Off-camera, Frank tells the supervisor that he doesn't believe what he's saying and wishes to return to regular duty. The supervisor understands how Frank feels. He tells Frank he can return to his post once the Occupy demonstrations are over. The supervisor informs Frank he's been scheduled to appear on *John Federman*, a nationally broadcast late-night talk show. Federman interviews Frank. As a surprise, Federman brings out the aforementioned bongo player. Frank is coaxed into dancing. After this display, Frank leaves the stage feeling great shame and embarrassment as his wife tries to console him.

Frank lines up with fellow officers. The supervisor orders them to break up the Occupy encampments and thus end the protests. Frank and Tommy stand stoically as they watch the

marchers. When the signal is given, they act ferociously, using their nightsticks to club the protesters. They return to the police station and relate what happened. Frank, through his violence, has regained the respect of Tommy and Mike. He returns home, where his wife is thankful that the days of *Frank the Cop* are over.

Character Breakdown

Frank Sturgis

Main protagonist. Frank's kindness to an elderly Occupy Wall Street demonstrator is captured on camera by a local TV station. He soon becomes a national celebrity, known as *Frank the Cop*, who says that police officers need to be courteous and friendly at all times. This causes him great mental distress, as his words run counter to how he truly feels. During the breakup of the Occupy encampments, Frank acts with great ferocity to regain the respect of his fellow officers.

Phyllis Sturgis

Frank's wife. She's adamantly opposed to Frank's acting friendly since she feels he risks losing his dignity as well as the respect of his colleagues and the public at large. She becomes star-struck when visiting the set of *The John Federman Show*.

Tommy

Frank's police partner. Tommy is quick to anger and is about to arrest an elderly Occupy demonstrator when Frank intervenes to handle the situation calmly. Later on, he and Frank ferociously break up the Occupy encampments.

Mike

Fellow officer. Like Tommy, he is quick to anger and is only too happy to break up the Occupy encampments violently.

Supervisor

He chastises Frank for showing undue "affection" towards an elderly demonstrator, but after speaking with the police commissioner, he instructs Frank to act even friendlier. Later, he orders the police to break up the Occupy encampments.

Commissioner

He sends an order to Frank to display courtesy towards all Occupy demonstrators and is instrumental in turning Frank into a national celebrity known as *Frank the Cop*.

Harriet Francis

Television reporter. She interviews Frank after watching him diffuse a tense situation during the Occupy demonstrations. She later has him as a guest on a local television station, during which he explains the need for police officers to be kind and courteous at all times.

John Federman

Late-night talk show host. He interviews Frank on his nationally broadcast show. As a surprise, he brings out the bongo player from the Occupy demonstrations, who accompanies as Frank is made to dance. This causes Frank great embarrassment.

Suggested Roles

Though a more expansive cast is preferable, *Frank the Cop* can be performed with a cast of six, as follows:

- Frank Sturgis
- Phyllis Sturgis, Harriet Francis, demonstrator
- Tommy
- Supervisor, Second Marcher, Harvey Marshall (bongo player)
- Commissioner, John Federman, First Marcher
- Mike, cameraman, demonstrator