

## Frank the Cop

By Daniel A. Wolf

### Cast of Characters

Frank Sturgis	1 <sup>st</sup> marcher
Supervisor	2 <sup>nd</sup> marcher
Commissioner	Harriet Francis
Phyllis Sturgis	Camera man
Tommy	John Federman
Mike	Harvey Marshall

### Scene 1.

*Harriet Francis, television reporter, stands at the side as police commissioner prepares to speak.*

Harriet: I am now at police headquarters where the commissioner is about to speak concerning tomorrow's Occupy Wall Street demonstration.

*Police commissioner stands behind microphones. Officers stand behind him.*

Police commissioner: We just had a meeting of all police supervisors who will be working during the Occupy demonstration tomorrow. There are a number of things I want to make clear. We recognize that our responsibility is to protect life and property. We also recognize that we have a responsibility to protect the right of the people to exercise freedom of speech. Now we know that Occupy does not have a permit to demonstrate. Still, we will allow them to use the streets so long as they remain peaceful. In addition, police have been instructed to demonstrate both professionalism and restraint so that citizens may exercise their constitutional right to assembly and again to freedom of speech. Thank you.

*Police are milling around the locker room area putting on their uniforms. They talk various things-family, job, sports, etc. Police supervisor enters.*

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Police supervisor: Line up.

*Police officers line up.*

Now as you know today is the first day of the Occupy demonstrations. We do not know how long this will go on. Still, as you heard the commissioner yesterday, we are to exercise both discipline and restraint. The demonstrators, whether you agree with them or not, have a constitutionally protected right to assemble and exercise free speech so long as they remain peaceful. Therefore, we are to remain professional and courteous in every encounter. Are there any questions? *(pause)* No? Ok, you all have your assignments. See you out there. Dismissed.

*Frank Sturgis, his partner Tommy, and a fellow officer prepare to leave.*

Mike: Show restraint? I'd like to bash those fuckin' commies with my stick. That's how I show restraint.

*Tommy overhears.*

Tommy: Fuckin' A. Right, Frank?

Frank: Can't. You heard the captain.

Mike: What- you some kind of commie?

Frank: No, just doing my job.

Tommy: Yeah, I'm doing my job too. Just let one of those punks get out of hand, even a little and they're going home...

*Hits his hand with his nightstick.*

with a bad headache.

Tommy: Splitting headache.

Mike: Fuckin' A.

*Tommy and Mike high five each other.*

Frank: *(to Tom)* Let's go. I'll drive.

Mike: (to Tom) Enjoy your day with the commie.

Tommy laughs.

## Scene 2.

Frank and Tommy stand near each other as Occupy protesters demonstrate. They chant "We are the 99 percent", "Whose streets? Our streets!", and "The people united will never be defeated" while carrying signs reading: We are the 99%, People before profit, End Corporate Greed, Poverty is Violence, and Trust Who? Harriet Francis and camera man observe the march.

Tommy: Can you believe all these fuckin' commies in one place?

Frank: They look like average people to me.

Tommy: They may look it but they're not. Ever hear of fellow travelers?

Frank: No, what's that?

Tommy: Communist sympathizers, just like these people.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher stops momentarily.

Hey, buddy, keep moving.

1<sup>st</sup> Marcher: Just catching my breath.

Tommy: (angry) What you say?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Just need to catch my breath. I need a minute. Not that young anymore.

Tommy: I don't care how old you are. Keep moving.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: I will officer. Soon.

Tommy: Are you defying my order? Move or I'm taking you in.

Harriet: (to camera man) Let's get this.

Camera man films the proceeding. Harriet holds microphone to capture the event.

Frank: Tom, I can handle this. (to 1<sup>st</sup> marcher) Hi, where you from?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Newbury.

Frank: Newbury? My wife and I were just there. I love that waffle place. What's it called?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Frieda's Waffle House.

Frank: That's right. Great food. Anyway, we just want to make sure the march moves along. I'm sure you understand.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Of course.

Frank: Look, take as long as you need. There's no hurry.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: I appreciate it. *(pause)* I'm fine now?

Frank: You sure?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Yes.

Frank: How old are you if I may ask?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: 61.

Frank: 61! I hope I'm in your shape when I'm 61. That's fantastic. Ready to go?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Yes, thank you.

Frank: Enjoy the march. You're lucky to have such fine weather.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Say, would you mind if I get a picture the two of us? I'd like to show my wife.

Frank: No problem.

*1<sup>st</sup> marcher approaches 2<sup>nd</sup> marcher.*

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Would you mind taking a picture of me and the officer?

2<sup>nd</sup> marcher: Sure.

*1<sup>st</sup> marcher gives 2<sup>nd</sup> marcher his I-phone.*

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Here, just push the button.

*He and Frank hold each other's shoulders and smile. 2<sup>nd</sup> marcher focuses and takes picture.*

2<sup>nd</sup> marcher: Got it.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Thanks.

Frank: Have a good day. If you see me tomorrow don't forget to say hi.

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: I will.

Frank: Bye.

Cameraman: *(to reporter)* Got it.

Harriet: All of it?

Camera man: Every word.

Harriet: Great. Let's see if I can talk to him.

*Harriet approaches Frank.*

Officer, can I have a word?

Frank: OK.

Harriet: I noticed you speaking to that elderly gentleman.

Frank: Yes, he just needed to stop for a minute.

Harriet: You appeared quite concerned.

Frank: He was about my father's age so I understand what he was going through.

Harriet: How do you feel about today's march?

Frank: Fine, so long as it remains peaceful.

Harriet: And you are?

Frank: Frank Sturgis of the 23<sup>rd</sup> district.

Harriet: Thank you, officer.

Frank: You're welcome.

Harriet: So there you have it. Things appear to be going well here and with officers like the one we just saw I don't anticipate any problems. From the Occupy protest in center city this is Harriet Francis. *(to cameraman)* Let's get it on the 6 o'clock news.

*Tommy looks both stunned and disgusted.*

Tommy: I don't believe it. I don't believe it.

### Scene 3.

*Next day. Police officers are dressing and getting ready for duty. Supervisor enters.*

Supervisor: Officer Frank Sturgis.

Frank: Here.

Supervisor: Follow me.

*Supervisor leads Frank into his office. Supervisor sits behind his desk while Frank stands at attention.*

Supervisor: What the hell was that yesterday? It's on every TV station. Hell, you did everything but give that guy a foot massage. We're police officers, not the frigin' bobsy twins! Understand?

Frank: I understand.

Supervisor: Explain yourself.

Frank: The man in question appeared to be feeling ill. I was just trying to help.

Supervisor: This had nothing to do with your partner, did it?

Frank: No.

Supervisor: Because I know Tommy. He could be a hothead sometimes.

Frank: He maintained professionalism throughout.

Supervisor: *You* sure?

Frank: Yes, sir. Completely professional.

Supervisor: How long have you been with the force?

Frank: 17 years.

Supervisor: Then I assume you know the Police Code of Conduct.

Frank: Of course.

Supervisor: Then I'm sure you understand *Performance of Duties as a Police Officer*.

Frank: I haven't read it for some time sir, but I make every effort to conduct myself in a professional manner at all times whether on duty or off.

Supervisor: Here's what it says: *A police officer shall perform all duties impartially without favor or affection*. You understand what that means?

Frank: Yes, sir.

Supervisor: Do you agree you may have demonstrated favor or affection yesterday?

Frank: I agree and will henceforth demonstrate neither favor nor affection in the discharging of my duties. I assure you.

Supervisor: Good. This is just a warning. Given your record I see no need for any disciplinary action at this time. Still, I think it best you be assigned to a desk until the demonstrations are over.

Frank: Thank you, sir.

Supervisor: Dismissed.

*Frank exits. Telephone rings. Supervisor answers.*

Supervisor: Yes, commissioner. Be there as soon as I can.

Scene 4.

*Supervisor knocks on Commissioner's door.*

Commissioner:                               Come in.

*Supervisor enters and stands across from commissioner who is seated behind a desk.*

*Supervisor:*                               Yes, sir. You sent for me?

Commissioner:                             I happened to watch the evening news last night.

Supervisor:                                I have it totally under control. I just spoke with the officer in question and he's assured me he will demonstrate neither favor nor affection in the discharge of his duties. I gave him a warning, but if you feel some disciplinary action is warranted I will concur.

Commissioner:                             What are you talking about-disciplinary action? He should be commended not punished.

Supervisor:                                Sir?

Commissioner:                             That's right-commended. Do I have to remind you how many law suits the police department is facing? At least five, maybe more. All concerning *(makes the quote sign with his fingers)* police brutality which could cost the city millions of dollars in settlements. That officer did a great thing-put the police department in a good light. Made us look kind, friendly, compassionate. Just the publicity we need. Where is he?

Supervisor:                                I put him on desk duty?

Commissioner:                             Are you crazy? Desk duty? Get him out there. Tell him to act like he did yesterday.

Supervisor:                                Yes, sir.

Commissioner:                             In fact, let's him a star-get him on TV, magazines, newspapers. Make him the face of the police department. What's his name?



Supervisor: Frank Sturgis.

Commissioner: Frank Sturgis. Frank the cop. Has a nice ring to it. That's it. He's *Frank the Cop*. What are you waiting for? Go back and tell him to get on duty.

Supervisor: Yes, sir.

Scene 5.

*Frank stands before the supervisor in his office.*

Frank: Yes, sir.

Supervisor: I just spoke with the commissioner.

Frank: Sir, please. I have a wife and kids. I can't afford to lose this job. Like I said, I'll faithfully follow the Code of Conduct. Could you ask him for a second chance? Being a policeman has been my lifelong dream.

Supervisor: Relax. No one's getting fired. On the contrary, the commissioner would like you to do what you did yesterday; you know, being friendly and all that.

Frank: I don't understand. I thought you didn't want that.

Supervisor: I didn't but the commissioner feels you helped our image, put the police in a good light. You know, public relations.

Frank: What about the desk job?

Supervisor: Forget it. He wants you out there. You can go out tomorrow. It's getting late. In fact, why don't you go home? Take the rest of the day off. Get some rest.

Frank: You sure?

Supervisor: Sure, *Frank the Cop*.

Scene 6.

*Frank's home. There is a sofa, coffee table, man's chair, and television. His wife, Phyllis, sits on the sofa reading the newspaper. Frank enters in civilian clothes.*

Wife: What are you doing home so early?

Frank: The Sup [soup] gave me the day off.

Wife: How come?

Frank: Ready for this? Remember how I helped one of the marchers?

Wife: Of course, it was on TV.

Frank: So the sup calls me in his office and tells me not to do it again, not to get too friendly with the marchers. An hour later he calls me back in his office and tells me the commissioner wants me to be friendly. Can you believe it? First, I think I'm getting fired then the commissioner commends me.

Phyllis: I don't understand. Why does he want you to be friendly?

Frank: Seems like I gave the police a good image. You know, public relations.

Phyllis: Don't do it. Just be yourself.

Frank: I have no choice. The commissioner expects me. Then I'd really lose my job.

Phyllis: They're using you.

Frank: No they're not. And even if they were it's OK. I don't mind helping the force. Maybe I can do some good.

Phyllis: You're a police officer, not a guidance counselor. Let others worry about image.

Frank: You're taking this the wrong way.

Phyllis: I am not. They love using you guys. I'm still waiting for all that overtime pay.

Frank: It's coming.

Phyllis: *(not believing)* Sure.

Frank: Relax. There's nothing to worry about. In a few days the protests will be over then I can go back to work as usual.

Phyllis: Just be careful.

Frank: I will.

### Scene 7.

*Occupy demonstration as before. Frank stands near Tom. Frank high fives the marchers and takes pictures with them. Harvey Marshall enters. He plays bongos as Frank dances wildly as marchers chant "Go Frank go!" "Go Frank go!" Cameramen capture the event. Tom watches disgustedly.*

### Scene 8.

*Television studio. Frank and Harriet Francis sit near each other. There's a small table between them with bottles of water. Supervisor watches from the side. Frank wears his police uniform.*

Director: 3, 2, 1,

*Director points at Harriet.*

Harriet: Good evening. I'm your host Harriet Francis and welcome to another addition of *News and Views*, the program that takes a deeper look at some of the stories making headlines in the metropolitan area. Tonight we are pleased to welcome Officer Frank Sturgis who has become somewhat of a national sensation with his infectious personality during the current Occupy demonstration. Officer Sturgis...

Frank: Please, call me Frank.

Harriet: Ok, Frank, may I ask, why have you decided to assume such a friendly demeanor? Most police, I think you'll agree, tend to look rather grim while performing their tasks.

Frank: You're right but I just don't see any reason why police need to look so serious. Demonstrators are not doing anything more than exercising their constitutionally protected rights to freedom of assembly and, more importantly, to freedom of expression. After all, those freedoms are the bedrock of our democracy which continue to make us the envy of the world.

Harriet: That's a wonderful answer Frank, but what do you say to your fellow officers who come in contact with demonstrators who, shall we say, are less than peaceful? For instance, there have been some instances of property damage and some officers have actually been injured.

Frank: I understand. Still, officers should exhibit restraint as much as possible. I believe if officers are to gain the trust of the people, they need to demonstrate professionalism even in unruly situations. And I believe the best way to do that is to be friendly, helpful, and, above all, courteous. That will leave a more enduring impact than simply resorting to force.

Harriet: Thank you, Officer Frank and continue good luck. We'll be back after this message.

Off camera: Cut.

Harriet: Thank you.

Frank: My pleasure.

*Frank walks off set. Supervisor meets him.*

Supervisor: Good work, Frank. You're becoming a natural.

Frank: But I don't believe it. Officers need to use force. I don't say always but certainly sometimes. Can't just walk around like happy go lucky fools. It's a dangerous world out there.

Supervisor: Think we don't know that? Of course we do. Believe me. I've cracked quite a few heads in my day. Think I wouldn't like to crack some of these protesters? Damn right I would but not now. Better we show a more human face. Like I said, it's good public relations. The department will not forget it. You can be sure of that.

Frank: What's next?

Supervisor: Now relax. We're flying you to Hollywood this weekend. We have you booked on The John Federman Show.

Frank: What?

Supervisor: The John Federman Show.

Frank: No!

Supervisor: Frank, it's national. You can reach millions of people.

Frank: I'm a police officer, not a damn movie star.

Supervisor: You're only on a few minutes. We even wrote some jokes for you. Take your wife. I'm sure she'd love it out there.

Frank: No. It's enough. I feel stupid saying police have to be kind and friendly. That's not our job. Guys back at the station think I've lost my mind. I just want to get back to work.

Supervisor: You will. Soon. I promise.

Frank: I'm nice to one guy because my partner's about to club him and now I'm a friggin' show horse.

Supervisor: Tommy?

Frank: That's right.

Supervisor: I asked you about that.

Frank: Code of blue. Can't speak ill of a fellow officer.

Supervisor: Yeah, I thought so. Same as his father, a real hot head. Listen, I'm not permitted to say this but I heard something.

Frank: What?

Supervisor: The protests will be over soon. Decisions have been made.

Frank: When?

Supervisor: Soon. That's all I can say.

Frank: I just tell you this. Whether they're over or not either I'm either back at work or I quit. You understand?

Supervisor: Just do Federman.

Frank: I'm serious, sup. I'll quit. I'm not kidding.

Frank: I understand.

#### Scene 9.

*John Federman television set. There is a table for the host and chairs on the side. On the table are cups and a box of tissues. Frank and his wife enter and look around. Both wear casual clothes.*

Phyllis: Oh my God! Over there. Isn't that Brad Pitt?

Frank: I think your right.

Phyllis: Who's he talking to?

Frank: Looks like Julia Roberts.

Phyllis: You're right. Frank, I'm so nervous.

Frank: Relax. They're just people.

Phyllis: *(sarcastic)* Sure, like you and me.

*Federman approaches.*

Federman: You must be *Frank the Cop*.

Frank: Yes, and this is my wife Phyllis.

Federman: Nice to meet you. (*to Frank*) You're quite the celebrity these days.

Frank: Just doing my job.

Federman: You're more than that. Can't go anywhere without seeing your picture.

Frank: Just a regular guy.

Federman: So humble. I like that. Anyway, you're my first guest. You have your uniform?

Frank: Yes.

Federman: Great. I'll introduce you, you'll come out, we shake hands, then you sit. You know the joke, right?

Frank: I know it.

Federman: Let's review anyway. So I say, "May I call you Frank?" You say something like "Sure, no problem." Then I say, "Good, I didn't want to get a ticket." And you say, "Only if you're not funny." See? Then we'll talk about how you got famous. Any questions?

Frank: No.

Federman: Just to tell you we have a little surprised planned.

Frank: What's that?

Federman: Can't tell you. Otherwise, it wouldn't be a surprise, right?

Frank: Yeah, guess you're right.

Federman: Don't worry. You'll like it. So we start taping in an hour. There's a dressing room for you to change. Then just wait in the Green room until we call you.

Frank: Thank you.

Phyllis:                               Bye.

Federman:                             Bye.

Frank:                                 *(to Phyllis)* What surprise?

Phyllis:                               I have no idea.

Scene 10.

*The John Federman Show. Federman sits at the desk wearing a suit and tie. Frank and Phyllis wait in the wings. Frank wears his police uniform. Tommy and Mike sit on a sofa watching the show on television.*

Tommy:                                 Can't wait to see this.

Mike:                                  Fuckin' A.

Federman:                             Our first guest hardly needs any introduction. You've seen him on TV, in magazines, interviewed by all the major newspapers. Bigger than the Beatles. Here he is-*Frank the Cop!*

*Canned applause. Frank enters wearing his uniform, shakes hands with Federman, waves to the audience, and sits.*

Federman:                             Look at that- a standing ovation. And you don't even sing.

*Canned laughter.*

  It's a pleasure to meet you. May I call you Frank?

Frank:                                 No problem.

Federman:                             Are you sure? I don't want to get a ticket.

*Canned laughter.*

Frank:                                 Only if you're not funny.

*Federman laughs hysterically with the audience.*

Federman:                             I think I know what your next job is.

*Canned laughter.*



So you've become quite a celebrity. It all started with the Occupy protests. Am I right?

Frank: That's right.

Federman: And you seem to have taken a different approach than most police officers.

Frank: Yes. I didn't see any need to get tough. I thought the best way was to be friendly and courteous. After all, whether you agree with the protests or not, people have a right, and may I stress a *constitutional* right, to assemble and exercise their freedom of speech. That's the bulwark of our democracy and what continues to make our country the great place that it is.

*Canned applause. Federman stands and applauds Frank.*

Federman: That's a great answer, Frank. Now we understand you are quite the dancer. *(to off stage)* Can we show the tape? Here, watch.

*Frank and Federman look up at a monitor. It's the scene where Frank danced with the marchers. You hear bongos played and marchers chanting "Go Frank go! Go Frank go!"*

Hey, you got some killer moves. So what we did was fly out that bongo player. His name is Harvey Marshall. *(to Harvey)* Harvey, come on out.

*Harvey enters with bongos. Frank appears shocked.*

*(to Harvey)* How you doing?

*Harvey shakes hands with Frank.*

So Harvey here is going to play the bongos and we're gonna watch Frank dance! *(to audience)* Who wants to see Frank dance?

*Canned cheers and applause.*

Let's give Frank some encouragement. Everybody! Go Frank go! Go Frank go!

*Everyone shouts "Go Frank go." Bongos begin. Frank reluctantly stands up and dances.*

Mike:   What the fuck?

*Bongos stop.*

Yeah! Thanks, Frank. We'll be back after a word from our  
sponsors.

*Frank shakes hands with Federman, and leaves set. Phyllis watches as Frank buries his head in his hands  
feeling extremely embarrassed.*

Frank:    Oh, my God. Oh, my God!

Scene 11.

*Police locker area. Police are dressing for the day's work. Frank enters. He quietly gets dressed.*

Mike:    Hey, look who's here-Friggin' Tiny Tim. Tiptoeing through the tulips  
today, Frank?

Tommy:   Frank doesn't tiptoe. He dances like this.

*Tommy imitates Frank's dancing on the John Federman Show. Officers laugh.*

Mike:    Hey, Frank, want some granola? How about some kale for your micro-  
biotic diet?

Tommy:   What you gonna wear today, Frank? A mini-skirt? Carry a magic wand  
with you? "Oh, Officer Frank, don't hurt me with your magic wand."

*Officers laugh.*

Mike:    Yeah, Frank, thanks for making our job 20 times harder. The other day I  
told a demonstrator to keep moving and he said, "Why can't you say it  
nicely like Officer Frank?"

*Frank remains quiet. Supervisor enters.*

Supervisor:    Line up.

*All line up at attention including Frank.*

Supervisor: I just received word that we're breaking up the demonstration today. This order comes from up high and I mean very high. We need to get back to normal-no tents, no clinics, no libraries, nothing. By this evening the mayor, the governor, and even the President want the streets clear. I think you know what this means. Everyone will resume normal positions. You'll move when I give the order. Dismissed.

Scene 12.

*Occupy demonstration as before. Frank and Tommy stand near each other as demonstrators march by.*

2<sup>nd</sup> marcher: Officer Frank! How are you today, Officer Frank? Hey, high five!

*Frank remains stone faced, refusing to high five.*

2<sup>nd</sup> marcher: Hey, Frank, what's the matter? Come on, man, high five!

*Frank continues to look stone faced, refusing to high five.*

2<sup>nd</sup> marcher: Man, what's gotten into you? You Ok, Frank?

Frank: *(stern)* Move!

2<sup>nd</sup> marcher: Chill, man. Chill.

*Tommy looks in the distance.*

Tommy: *(to Frank)* There's the signal. Let's go.

*Both Frank and Tommy take out their nightsticks and in slow motion attack the demonstrators with great ferocity. Frank takes particular delight in inflicting pain. There are screams of Fraaaank! Fraaaank! Slow motion ends. Demonstrators writhe in pain.*

Tommy: Way to go, Frank.

*1<sup>st</sup> marcher approaches Frank. Frank is about to hit him.*

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: Frank, no. Stop!

Frank: What do you want?

1<sup>st</sup> marcher: What happened? What happened to you?

Frank: Just following orders. Now get outta here.

*Frank and Tommy turn and look menacingly at the audience while holding their nightsticks.*

### Scene 13.

*Police locker room. Superintendent stands waiting as Frank, Tommy, and Mike enter. Frank has a bandage on his hand.*

Mike: Hey, sup, you should have seen us. It was like batting practice out there. I cracked so many heads I lost count.

Tommy: You? Frank was fuckin' Babe Ruth. I mean all I heard was *(imitates hitting someone with a nightstick)* Crack! Crack! Crack! He even got the bongo player. I'll be a long time before that guy plays bongos again. Look, he knocked so many heads he cut his hand.

Superintendent: *(to Frank)* Have somebody look at that before you go home.

Frank: Alright.

Mike: Oh, you gotta hear this. I'm about to hit some guy and he says to me, "You don't have to do this. You don't have to do this." I said, "You're right, asshole. I don't have to do this. I *want* to do this!" *(swings arms)* Crack!

Tommy: Fuckin' A!

*Mike and Tommy high five.*

Superintendent: All right, guys, good work. Now go home and relax.

Tommy: You got it, sup.

### Scene 14.

*Frank's home. Frank enters. He's wearing civilian clothes. He has a bandage on his right hand.*

Frank: Honey, I'm home.

*Phyllis enters.*

Phyllis: How was your day? Bet you couldn't wait to get back to work. Anybody say anything?

Frank: No, like I never left.

Phyllis: Nobody say anything like welcome back?

Frank: Not really. A few glad to see you but nothing special.

Phyllis: You're done being *Frank the Cop*?

Frank: All done. The sup thanked me for everything and said from now on I can just be myself.

Phyllis: I'm sure you were happy to hear that.

Frank: You're not kidding.

Phyllis: How was your day? I saw on TV the police breaking up the protests.

Frank: That's right.

Phyllis: How'd it go? Any problem?

Frank: Not at all. Everyone was very cooperative. We said, "Ok, time to go. We need to clear the streets" and people just got up and left.

Phyllis: That's good. What happened to your hand?

Frank: Nothing. Little cut.

Phyllis: Finally, we're back to normal.

Frank: Yes.

Phyllis: Though I admit it was great seeing Brad Pitt.

Frank: They're just people like you and me.

Phyllis: Yeah, maybe you're right.

**End of play**

