

**FALLING ON HEARING EYES**

- **a touring museum of sign /anguish  
for people with communication disorders**

by

Willy Conley

## Acknowledgements

*Falling on Hearing Eyes* was first developed in 1998 at Towson University under the M.F.A. Theatre program. The showcase, directed by Juanita Rockwell, was presented on May 15, 16, 1998 at the university's Studio Theatre, and at the 1998 National and Worldwide Deaf Theatre Conference in the Chester Meeting House, Chester, Connecticut on June 26, 1998. The cast was as follows:

GUIDE: Willy Conley

TECHIE: Eric Beatty

The play had a second workshop development at Center Stage in Baltimore as part of a National Theatre Artist Residency Grant sponsored by Pew Charitable Trusts/Theatre Communications Group. The showcase, directed by Ken Albers, was presented in the Head Theatre on December 11, 1999. The dramaturge was Charlotte Stoudt, the visual dramaturge was Stella Antonio-Conley, and the stage manager was Neal Freeman. The cast was as follows:

GUIDE: Adrian Blue

TECHIE: Michael Regnier

During the summer of 2000, the National Theatre of the Deaf and members of the Actors' Academy further developed the play at Gallaudet University in the Black Box Theatre. In addition to those mentioned above, the playwright wishes to thank the following for their gracious support: Lori Brenneman, Tim Vasen, Irene Lewis, Jerry Goehring, Mike Lamitola, and Susan Jackson.

The play had its world premiere in Studio Five at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia during May 1 – 19, 2002. It was produced by Mimi Smith, artistic director of Amaryllis Theatre Company, in association with the National Theatre of the Deaf, and directed by Adrian Blue; set design was by Adrian Blue; lighting design by Dennis Webster; costume design by Catherine Rush; and production stage manager was Veronica Griego. The production was then accepted by Gallaudet University for the Deaf Way II International Arts Festival. On July 9-10, 2002, the show was performed in the Bernard Bragg Theatre on the Green at Gallaudet University; on July 11, 2002, the show was performed at Millenium Stage at The Kennedy Center. The cast was as follows:

GUIDE – Dennis Webster

TECHIE – John Zak

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

GUIDE – Deaf and fluent in American Sign Language; sole proprietor and tour guide of artifacts and history on Deaf Culture; he wears a thrift store shirt, tie, pants, and a museum guide jacket with epaulets. He introduces each exhibit in a magical or fun way using sleight-of-hand tricks, acrobatics, dance, or circus techniques.

TECHIE – Hearing and cannot sign well, but well enough to be understood; Multi-media Technician/Sign Language Interpreter-in-Training for GUIDE, his boss. Has a problem with oral fixation; he’s always eating or putting something into his mouth; he stutters and has a lisp, which often causes him to pronounce the word “deaf” as “death”; he is representative of many hearing people who have communication disorders.

### Setting

Time – the present

Place – Any place willing to accept this museum

### Notes

GUIDE and TECHIE are both tragi-comic clowns in the spirit of Footit and Chocolat, Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, and the like, but with a New Vaudevillian twist. GUIDE and TECHIE have a "subtle" and absurd gestural system of cues. For example, one gestural cue would be for when to project the next slide; another gestural cue would be for when TECHIE should begin voicing; another would be for when to play music; and so on.

It is strongly suggested to employ a visual dramaturge knowledgeable about Deaf culture for this play.

As the audience waits in the lobby to enter the theatre, GUIDE disguised as a peddler, sneaks around and hands people traditional ABC fingerspelling cards. The cards should have on both sides the following: Side A) “Hello! I am a deaf person. I am selling this Deaf Education System card to make my living. Will you kindly buy one to support my Deaf Culture museum? Pay any price you wish. Thank you. Side B) [Drawing of fingerspelled letters of the manual alphabet]. An usher spots the peddler and tries to shoo him away.

The lights flash off and on with bells ringing in the lobby. The usher gets up on a small platform and announces in ASL (with no voice interpretation) that the

Deaf and those who know sign language may sit anywhere they please. Those who don't know signs need to sit in the seats roped off for the SIGNING-IMPAIRED. The doors open and, ideally, the ushers lead the audience through the exhibits. If this is not possible then they may be led past the exhibits.

On the way in, the audience should pass a series of road signs on stands or hanging from somewhere:

- SLOW! DEAF CHILD AT PLAY. The word "at" has a slash through it, and a little arrow insert points to the handwritten words: "IN A" above "at", thus reading, SLOW DEAF CHILD AT<sup>^</sup>in a PLAY.
- DEAF PEDESTRIANS - SLOW!
- NO PEDALING, BEGGING, OR PANFRYING!!

On stage is a sad, shabby arrangement of odd, intriguing Deaf culture artifacts. The overall look is that of a very low budget, one-man museum. The following are not in any special order nor do they need to be numbered.

**EXHIBIT 1:** A technical control station in a corner of the museum. All of the electrical wiring leads to this station. It has a table, a chair, a music stand with a script, a clipboard, an air horn, a slide projector with a wire remote control, a Carousel tray of slides, a wireless VCR remote control, videotapes, a boom box, a microphone, a desk light, a framed certificate, and a sign with the well-known, 2-handed national symbol indicating SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER. Among all of this are some bags of junk food and cans of soda.

**EXHIBIT 2:** a standard desk telephone with an extra-long receiver cord and line cord. The line cord is connected to a phone jack secured somewhere to the TECHIE'S station, clearly visible to the audience. Somewhere next to the phone is a 150 watt bare-bulb phone-light signaller. The signaller is a separate unit not attached to the phone. When the phone rings, the light should flash synchronized with the ringing.

**EXHIBIT 3:** on a pedestal is a bust of ARISTOTLE set on black cloth; beneath and in front of the bust is a large, old body-type binaural hearing aid in the bra-like strap that typically goes with such hearing aids. The earplugs are affixed to the bust's ears. Also arranged besides this bust are other hearing aids in rough chronological order according to when they were

invented. An example would be starting with the ear trumpet, then the huge reel-to-reel tape recorder-sized hearing aid, the body aid, the ear level aid, and last the Miracle Ear type. This exhibit should draw people's eyes when waiting for the show to begin, especially with Aristotle bust as the centerpiece.

**EXHIBIT 4:** a two-sided blackboard on wheels set behind the bust; the following quote is handwritten: "Those who are born deaf all become senseless and incapable of reason." - Aristotle

**EXHIBIT 5:** a small, rickety, classroom projection screen. It should look worn with a tear on it somewhere.

**EXHIBIT 6:** a sign with the UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF THE DEAF — an ear with a slash through it. This sign is enclosed in glass and covered with dark velvet.

**EXHIBIT 7:** a closed-captioned TV-VCR set on a cart, which has two signs: the national "Q" and "CC" symbols for closed-captioning.

**EXHIBIT 8:** a waste can with large lettering that reads: WASTE

**EXHIBIT 9:** a large color poster of the two 29-cent U.S. postage stamps called "Recognizing Deafness" with the I-LOVE-YOU handshape on one stamp and a mother signing I-LOVE-YOU to an infant.

**EXHIBIT 10:** a large, simple, black-and-white poster of the American Manual Alphabet.

**EXHIBIT 11:** a table with a red-checkered cloth and a restaurant sign that reads: SOUP OF THE DAY — SHOO FLY SOUP, DESSERT SPECIAL - MILE HIGH CREME PIE.

**EXHIBIT 12:** a Model 28 or 32 Teletypewriter with an acoustic coupler; on the back of the machine is the INTERNATIONAL TTY logo.

**EXHIBIT 13:** a waist-high table with a honeydew melon on it and a 3-dimensional, segmented model of the human ear; next to them is an old, worn suitcase with stenciled letters: OFFICIAL HEARING KIT; also on the table, near it or above it is a large operating room photograph of a surgeon using a pneumatic drill on the barely-visible head of a patient.

**EXHIBIT 14:** a telegraph device; a sign with captions that read: “Samuel Morse communicated with his deaf wife by tapping on her hand. Thus, the Morse Code was invented.”

**EXHIBIT 15:** apart from the rest of the exhibits, a red antique chair with arm restraints; a sign sits on it that reads: “THE ORAL DEAF”

**EXHIBIT 16:** on a small pedestal or a museum block is a sign that reads:  
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) EXHIBIT – **UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

While the audience enters, TECHIE makes last-minute accommodations for the signing-impaired, setting up the projection screen, the projector, and the text slides. It is obvious that he is not very competent. He projects the first slide onto the screen, which is set in an absurd, out-of-the-way location:

**TEXT: CAPTIONS FOR THE SIGNING IMPAIRED WILL APPEAR HERE.**

He also checks to be sure all of the exhibits are in order. As he does all of this, he moves to the rhythm of whatever he’s listening to through a Walkman or I-Pod with well-concealed earpieces. When all is set, he goes behind his desk to sit down on a chair that is not there. He falls to the floor.

He gets up to bring on a chair and finally sits down. He puts his feet up to relax and munches on a snack. He falls asleep.

Meanwhile, the ushers direct the signing impaired to the taped-off signing impaired section. Ushers may need to keep moving back the signing-impaired tape boundaries to accommodate the potentially large numbers. The signing impaired audience should look like they are corralled into a section of the theatre. Even if the number of signing-impaired people is more than the number of seats in the section, at least a representative group is labeled for the rest of the audience to identify, and for the actors to use. The house lights remain on or dimmed slightly for the duration of the show, except where noted.

The peddler (GUIDE) has snuck into the theatre and continues passing out his ABC cards.

After everyone has been seated, GUIDE comes up on stage. He gets out of his peddler outfit, expecting TECHIE to be

there to help him change. He hangs up the peddler outfit and gets into his museum tour guide outfit. He looks around for TECHIE and finds him asleep. GUIDE goes over to the desk and taps the little desk bell. No response. He picks up the air horn honks it. No response. He thinks better of it and takes out a small flash unit and pops a flash in front of TECHIE's eyes. TECHIE falls off of his chair. He immediately jumps up and begins signing and speaking gibberish rapidly. The Walkman or I-Pod dangles from his ears.

#### TECHIE

vnmoijwlkmromcv**SAVEDEAF**CULTURE,fmoimoijrlmwlm**SAVEDEAF**  
**HILDREN**.sroutrecglpoolwer**SAVEDEAF**SCHOOLSxciwhidybcciuw**SAVE**  
**ASL**.skgubewobloiyew**ASL**FOREVER.xomelbhtwoiyubw**ASL**NOW.srub  
 wlnblkuty**ASL,ASL,ASL DEAF**POWER! —

GUIDE trips the flash again to snap TECHIE out of it. GUIDE gestures that they have a signing impaired audience and it's time for the exhibition to begin. He removes the Walkman and throws it in the waste can. TECHIE, half-blinded by the flash, goes back to his station.

GUIDE acknowledges the signing-impaired section in a sweetly patronizing way. He directs their attention to the projection screen and is dismayed to find that it's set in a bad location.

GUIDE gestures to TECHIE: "Why are those captions way up there? The audience's heads are moving back and forth between the captions and me."

Both do a short comical routine with one moving the projector screen around for an ideal location while the other maneuvers the projector, trying to keep

the projected image on the screen.  
Eventually, they find a compromising location.

He gives TECHIE a cue to bring up a slide, which gets projected onto TECHIE's chest.

GUIDE gestures a rectangle on his chest. TECHIE notices the projection on himself and immediately corrects it.

#### GUIDE

Welcome to my Museum of Signs for People with Communication Disorders. I have asked you to come tonight to listen to our frustrations...observe the beauty of our art and language...understand where we have come from...and appreciate the contributions that deaf people have made to society throughout history. Why? My people and my culture are...dying. Help me preserve them by improving my poor, humble museum. Send money. Please, help save Deaf Culture. Save ASL! Save our Deaf Schools! Save our Deaf children! Tonight's exhibit is called, "Falling on Hearing Eyes."

Grand gestural cue for the next slide that translates this speech.

**TEXT: Goodbye!**

*(silence)*

This isn't right.

TECHIE fiddles with the remote.

**TEXT: Send money.**

**TEXT: INTERMISSION**

**TEXT: "Deaf people can do anything but hear."  
- I. King Jordan, President  
Gallaudet University, 1988**

GUIDE gestures that the captions are still wrong.



**TEXT: "Sign Language is God's noblest gift to the deaf man."  
- George Veditz, President  
National Association of the Deaf, 1913**

**TEXT: ... Save Deaf Culture! Save ASL! Save Deaf Schools! Save Deaf children!**

GUIDE gestures to keep going;  
TECHIE'S getting close to the right one.

**TEXT: ...my people and my culture...are dying.**

**TEXT: ...understand our history**

**TEXT: ...appreciate deaf people's contributions to society**

**TEXT: ...observe our frustrations**

**TEXT: Welcome to my Museum of Signs for People with Communication Disorders...**

**TEXT: ...help me improve my poor, humble museum.**

**TEXT: "TONIGHT'S EXHIBIT IS CALLED: FALLING ON HEARING EYES"**

GUIDE gestures wildly and emphatically that this is the right slide. It scares TECHIE so much that he falls off of his chair again.

Gestural cue.

GUIDE

I am your guide for tonight.

Gives the gestural cue.

**TEXT: I am your guide for tonight.**

And this is my multi-media technician/sign language interpreter-in-training.

Gestural cue.

**TEXT: And this is my multi-media technician/sign language interpreter-in-training.**

While munching on something, TECHIE stands up to acknowledge the audience. He points to the INTERPRETER symbol. He copies the symbol and demonstrates its configuration, still chewing on his food throughout all of this.

**TEXT: ...at least he's cheap!**

GUIDE

How many of you are signing impaired?

No response. Gives the gestural cue, which he forgot.

**TEXT: How many of you are signing-impaired?**

GUIDE

Disappointed at the large number, GUIDE counts and relays the amount to TECHIE, who jots them down on a clipboard and takes another bite of his food.

And how many of you can sign?

Gestural cue.

**TEXT: How many can sign?**

If anyone raises a hand, he makes note of this and shows obvious delight. He relays the numbers to TECHIE.

[If the numbers are small, GUIDE inflates them to make it look good for the record.]

[If no one raises a hand, GUIDE crosses himself and looks skyward as if praying for hope for these people.]

## GUIDE

Indicates to TECHIE to start voice interpreting.

How do your eyes and hands feel? A little blurry? Stiff? Let's get 'em focused and warmed up.

## TECHIE

*(mumbles through food in his mouth)*

How do your eyes and hands feel? A little blurry? Stiff? Let's get 'em focused and warmed up.

GUIDE hands him a glass of water to swallow the food down. TECHIE holds out the glass for the GUIDE to take back. GUIDE dips his fingers in the water and washes his hands. After drying them off, he does a little sign-mime description of himself as a musical conductor before the audience.

He orchestrates an audience warm-up exercise using a baton. The baton should be used as an extension of his hand when he signs. He gets the signing impaired to stand up. If any of them stands in front of a deaf audience member, GUIDE moves the signing impaired out of the way so the deaf can see. He teaches the signing impaired a nice and easy step-by-step lesson on how to sign the word "can't". He quickly instructs the signers to sign "Can".

If the audience is with him, he extends this exercise by adding a few more signs. All along, TECHIE clearly translates in a sing-song manner.

## GUIDE

*(to signing impaired)*  
 “I can’t sign.”

*(to the signers)*  
 “I can sign.”

If the audience is still with him, he gives them the final lesson before conducting a symphony with TECHIE singing along.

*(to the signing impaired)*  
 “Dumb”

*(to the signers)*  
 “Deaf”

*(to both)*  
 “Deaf” and “Dumb”.

Hopefully this leads to a back-and-forth rhythm variations of: “Deaf and Dumb” “Deaf and Dumb” This builds to a grand finale ending with TECHIE almost losing his voice. He soothes it by drinking more water or soda, and some food.

GUIDE walks over to the INTERNATIONAL DEAF SYMBOL, and delicately removes the velvet cover revealing the glass enclosure.

## GUIDE

This is “sign” language.

He gestures the word SIGN literally, not as in SIGN LANGUAGE but as in a sign on a post. It should be: RECTANGLE-SHAPE + LANGUAGE.

Gestural cue.

**TEXT: This is sign language.**

He winks at the audience, showing off his tongue-in-cheek humor.

GUIDE

What does this sign mean?

Gestural cue.

**TEXT: What does this sign mean?**

GUIDE sees that the sign is upside down, so he quickly turns it upright.

GUIDE

TECHIE voices between munches.

(rhetorically)  
Does it mean ear surgery?

Gives cue for voicing that's visually different from the cue to project slides.

What about Vincent Van Gogh?

GUIDE gestures a "V" cutting off his ear. Gives cue for voicing.

How about... "Hear no evil"?

Gives cue for voicing.

Still don't know what it means?

GUIDE grabs a flashlight out of translates the sign's meaning into SEMAPHORE using the flashing light method.

Light bulb? Hahah – no!

Gives cue for voicing.

GUIDE takes out a couple of handkerchiefs from his pocket and does SEMAPHORE using the flag method.

Does it mean hearing people are not allowed here?

GUIDE taps out the answer in Morse code with audible beeps on the telegraph machine.

Gives cue for voicing.

Does it mean forbidden to hear?

Gives cue for voicing.  
TECHIE accidentally jams the remote into his mouth mistaking it for food. It gets stuck in his throat causing the slides to go on and on.

**TEXT: Does this mean hearing people are not allowed here?  
Forbidden to hear?  
A person with no ears?**

GUIDE goes over and examines the projection equipment and the wiring.

**Deaf as a post.  
Falling on deaf ears.  
Turning a deaf ear.  
Deaf and dumb.  
Deaf mute.  
Read my lips.  
Deafening sound!  
I'm not deaf, I'm ignoring you.  
You're lucky you can't hear that.  
Can you speak sign language?**

GUIDE finally notices that the source of the problem is in TECHIE'S mouth.

**Can you read braille?  
What's the matter, you deaf?  
Can you drive?**

**You speak well for a deaf person.  
 How do you wake up in the morning?  
 Are you death?  
 Are you death?  
 Are you death?**

GUIDE performs the HEIMLICH MANEUVER and out pops the remote. GUIDE sees that TECHIE was eating a SNICKERS bar that's similar in shape to the remote. He whacks TECHIE in the back of the head and throws the candy away in the waste can.

**Silence is golden.**

GUIDE

By the way, that symbol means. . .

The phone rings/flashes. Gestures for the audience to excuse him. He searches his pockets for his hearing aids but can't find them. He unplugs the hearing aids from the bust and plugs them into his ears, which is painful.

*(sign and voice)*

OWWWWWW!!! Buh-buh-buh, testing...one, two, three.

He picks up the phone and listens with the receiver upside-down on his chest in the usual way a deaf person would with a body aid.

Hello? Hello? Hel-looo?

He gestures for TECHIE to come listen. TECHIE listens and gestures that no one's on the line. During this next speech, GUIDE starts to become like a used car salesman making a pitch.

Now that I have these on, I might as well show you our evolution-of-the-hearing-aid exhibit. Somebody had the bright idea that deaf people oughta try to be more like hearing people. Boy, were they wrong! It all began with the ear

trumpet. Then this big monster that looks like a gigantic tape recorder. Kids were hobbled to their school desks when hooked up to these things. Next is what I'm wearing – the body aid. I used to wear this during the 1960's. All the kids used to make fun of me – they thought I was a robot from Mars. Imagine the poor deaf girls who had to wear this. They were freaks with three breasts. In the 1980's, these ear-level aids began to give deaf people some dignity. They come in brown, purple, green, or whatever color you choose. And finally one of the latest on the market – the Miracle Ear! Oh, those hearing aid manufacturers have gotten so smart! It's so tiny it fits right inside your ear canal. I must warn you...keep them away from dogs – they love to chew on plastic.

GUIDE pops the hearing aid in his mouth and chews on it.

Rrrowwff!!

He blows an occasional bubble with it while taking off the body aid and resetting it on the bust.

Meanwhile, TECHIE makes a quick, effortless phone call.

TECHIE

Is this Sal's? Good, I would like to order large pepperoni pizzas and have it delivered to the Museum of Signs for People with Communication D-d-d-disorders. How many? Let me see, make that *(under his breath, counting heads in the audience)* 20...**ONE** pizza pies. No, I said 20-**One!** Oh – and put extra cheese on all of them; I've got a coupon here. That's right. How much? *(his wallet shows a couple of dollars)*. Uh...just charge it to the museum. Ok, thank you. Bye.

GUIDE

*(sign only)*

What were you saying on the phone?

TECHIE

*(signs and voices)*

What did I say? Oh...it's okay. Not important.

GUIDE

Excuse me?



TECHIE  
It's okay. Not important.

GUIDE  
Well, I want to know.

TECHIE  
*(fingerspells and voices)*  
Pizza.

Goes back to his station.

GUIDE  
Pizza! He ruins my equipment, then calls for a pizza — just like that!

TECHIE  
I missed that. What did you say?

GUIDE pulls out two revolvers. He shoots one at TECHIE. Out shoots a little sign: DIDN'T GET IT? He shoots the other one: THAT'S OKAY...NOT IMPORTANT.

GUIDE

New beat. GUIDE grabs the megaphone and passes it to TECHIE. Both act like carnival barkers. Walks to the TV-VCR set-up.

Laaaaadies and Gentlemennnnnn. . . roll your eyeballs to this square device over here. This is the world's very first television with closed captions. See the symbols here?

He shows the CLOSED CAPTIONS sign.

He gestures to TECHIE to get the microphone ready. TECHIE turns on the mike and taps on it. A loud BOOM-BOOM comes out of the speakers. Startled, he looks up at the ceiling. GUIDE follows TECHIE'S gaze at the ceiling but sees nothing. TECHIE then opens his script and nods that he's ready.

## GUIDE

This is the symbol for "closed-captioning" — one of Deaf culture's major contributions to society. It has been proven that closed-captioned videotapes and TV programs have improved the reading skills of not only deaf children, but also hearing children.

He looks over at TECHIE to check on him reading aloud.

## TECHIE

This - is - the - universal - symbol - for - the - deaf.

## GUIDE

That's not what I just said. You're talking about the first exhibit – the universal symbol for the deaf. We've finished that. This is the second exhibit.

## TECHIE

Flips some pages forward and backward until he finds the right spot.

Oh, okay...the international symbol for the deaf – check! On to cc...

Reads directly from his script. GUIDE, noticing the slowness, walks over to stand behind TECHIE.

*(slow)*

This - is - the - symbol - for - "closed-captioning" — one - of - Deaf - culture's - major - contribution - to - society. It - has - been - proven - that - closed - captioned - videotapes - and - TV - programs - have - improved - the - reading - skills of - not - only - deaf - children, - but - also - hearing - children.

When TECHIE looks up from his script, he doesn't see GUIDE anywhere. He sits back to relax only to feel GUIDE behind him.

## GUIDE

Good, but a little faster. You're making me sound dumb.

*(to audience)*

All televisions manufactured after 1993, with a picture tube 13 inches or larger, are required by law to have a closed-captioning device built in.

TECHIE

*(rapidly and simultaneously)*

All televisions manufactured after 1993 with a picture tube 13 inches or larger are required by law to have a closed-captioning device built in.!!!

GUIDE looks over to check on TECHIE, who gives him a "thumbs-up" gesture.

The phone rings/flashes again.

GUIDE makes a move to put the hearing aids on again but stops midway, and thinks better of it. He gestures for TECHIE to answer it. TECHIE takes his sweet time getting to the phone.

TECHIE

*(speaking)*

Hellllloooo! You've reached the [*name of theatre or place*]. Well, we're in the m-m-m-middle of a t-t-t-tour right now. Uh-huh...for the Museum of Signs for People with Communication D-d-d-disorders. Are you calling to donate money?

GUIDE

Sign, please!

TECHIE

*(signing and speaking)*

For the Museum of Signs for People with Communication D-d-d—

GUIDE smacks TECHIE's signing hand to knock off the stuttering.

TECHIE

—disorders! We're giving a tour right now. Huh? The head tour guide? Yes, that's my boss - he's right here. You want to speak to him? Are you sure? Okayyyy...

Gestures it's for GUIDE. GUIDE puts on the hearing aids, fumbling with the wires and straps all over again.

GUIDE

OOOWWWWW...

Finally, he gets to the phone.

*(sign and voice)*

Hello? Hello? Hel-looo?

Gestures for TECHIE to come listen.  
TECHIE gestures that the person hung up. GUIDE takes the receiver back and listens again.

*(still signing and voicing)*HELLO? C'MON, I'M DEAF! ASSHOLE! [*applies the sign for ASSHOLE to the phone receiver*]*(notices the audience)*

OOPS. Sorry...

He's about to take off the hearing aids when the phone rings/flashes again. GUIDE and TECHIE dive for it. GUIDE beats him to it.

Hello? What? Huh? Wait, wait, wait....

Gestures to TECHIE to help listen in on the conversation and interpret. Both create an absurd picture with GUIDE holding the receiver upside-down against the hearing aid while TECHIE leans his ear towards it, interpreting.

TECHIE

*(signing and voicing)*

Go ahead...he wants to know why there's a deaf person on the line.

GUIDE

*(sign only)*

Who's calling please?

TECHIE

*(signing and speaking throughout)*

Who's calling please? You want to talk to my supervisor? I told you he's standing right here holding the phone.

GUIDE

*(signing and voicing)*

Who is this?

TECHIE

He's deaf. I said he's DEAF!

GUIDE

I'M DEAF!

TECHIE

Yeah, I have a deaf boss. Never heard of that?

GUIDE holds the phone while TECHIE tries to keep up with him physically and verbally. GUIDE's passionate signing borders physically abusing TECHIE. At some point during the following exchange, TECHIE subconsciously takes over holding the receiver.

GUIDE

*(signing passionately)*

Tell him deaf people have all kinds of jobs - we've got deaf doctors, lawyers, accountants, scientists, researchers, college professors, professional athletes, actors, college professors, restaurant owners, cooks, pilots, software engineers, truck drivers, hairdressers, fashion designers, graphic designers, and many, many more. And they ALL can be bosses. Who's calling, please?

TECHIE

*(voicing)*

Uh - hold on, he wants to say something to you...deaf people have all kinds of jobs - they've got deaf doctors, lawyers, accountants, scientists, researchers, college professors, and - uh, uh, so on and so on, etc, etc, etc, blah-blah-blah, and yadayadaya. And they all can be bosses. Who's calling, please? *(to GUIDE)* He wants to know who we are first.

## GUIDE

Oh – and another thing, tell him that he should know that there are all kinds of deaf people in the world: the hearing-impaired, the hard-of-hearing, the late-deafened, the cochlear-implanted, the pre-lingually deaf, the post-lingually deaf, the profoundly deaf, and the stone deaf. Once again, WHO - ARE - YOU?

## TECHIE

Each enunciation of “death” results in a spray of spit on GUIDE’s face.

Oh – and another thing...my boss wants you to know that there are all kinds of death in the world: the hearing impaired death, the hard-of-hearing death, the late death, the cochlear implanted death, the pre-lingually death, the post-lingually death, the profoundly death, and the stone death. Once again, who are you?

## TECHIE

After holding the phone receiver upside-down all this time like the way GUIDE does it, he finally sets it right on his ear in the normal way.

*(signing and voicing)*

Sal’s Pizza? *(to GUIDE)* AW! They ran out of pepperoni!

GUIDE snatches the receiver out of TECHIE’s hand and slams it down on the cradle.

*(to the phone just before the hang-up)*

Sausage will be fine.

## GUIDE

*(signs only)*

I hate telephones!!

Looks at the sign-impaired section.

Didn't get it?

Shows them his pat-response signs:  
DIDN'T GET IT? THAT'S  
OKAY...NOT IMPORTANT.

GUIDE takes off the hearing aids. He's about to set them back on the bust, but stops. He likes the way the bust looks without the hearing aids. He throws them in the waste can.

Now, back to closed-captioning...

Gives TECHIE the cue to put in the videotape.

TECHIE gestures: "which one?"

GUIDE gestures the shape, look, and movement of BARNEY, the purple dinosaur.

I love you, you love me..., you know?

TECHIE

Oh yes! I love [*with I-Love-You handshape*] that movie.

GUIDE turns on the TV and puts in the tape.

TECHIE stands downstage in position to voice interpret. GUIDE gestures for him to get down, the deaf can't see. TECHIE lies down flat on the stage.

A movie with sexual content in closed captions fades up [perhaps *BODY DOUBLE* with the Melanie Griffith part that repeats the FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD lines: "If you really want to come..."].

TECHIE translates the following using his script. His voice, phrasing, and physicality become progressively sensual. Occasionally, TECHIE slips over to reading the captions from the video, interspersing the captions with the

text in his script. While doing all of this, TECHIE progressively slithers over to the TV to get a closer look.

## GUIDE

Stands behind and/or to the sides of the TV as he goes into this long-winded explanation.

Closed captioning is great for teaching English as a second language. Non-English speaking countries are starting to want this feature on their TV sets, which has made closed captioning an important tool for improving our economy.

Closed-captioning is a somewhat strange term. It does not mean that the captions are closed off to everyone, but that the word "closed" simply means that the captions are hidden in the video signal on Line 21 of the vertical blanking interval (VBI). They're invisible unless you have a decoder.

There are two ways to get closed captions...

At some point during this monologue GUIDE notices the audience's reactions. He looks at the TV, and then at TECHIE, whose body language shows he's in a sexual trance.

GUIDE stops the tape and ejects it. He finds the right videotape cover, puts the tape in it. He finds the Barney tape and puts it back in its cover. He shows TECHIE the broad, curvy gestural outline of Barney.

## TECHIE

*(sign and voice)*

I thought you wanted the video of that beautiful woman (*gestures an hourglass figure*). That didn't look like Barney the Dinosaur to me.

GUIDE is about ready to smack TECHIE over the head with the mistaken video when a mail package lands in his hands.



Air mail!

GUIDE shakes the package and doesn't feel anything. He shakes it again near TECHIE's ear causing him to duck for cover.

GUIDE

What's the matter?

TECHIE

*(sign and voice throughout)*

Could be a mail bomb.

GUIDE gets out a penknife and delicately cuts the packaging tape. He takes out a pair of tweezers and carefully removes the wrapping.

GUIDE

The new ASL exhibit I ordered.

TECHIE

Oh – the ASL exhibit finally arrived.

GUIDE pulls out a box with the letters **ASL** printed in bold on all sides.

GUIDE

It's so light and small!

TECHIE

Why do you say that?

GUIDE

I thought I ordered this big ASL exhibit with videos, posters, books, CD-ROMs, and DVDs. ASL is supposed to be big!

Brings the box over to the desk light and delicately opens it with the penknife and tweezers.

TECHIE

*(sign and voice throughout)*

You thought you ordered a big ASL exhibit with videos, posters, books, CD-ROMs, and DVDs? ASL is big, huh?

GUIDE hands him a folded piece of paper from the box.

Ah, the instruction manual... *(reading)* "ASL is the third most used language in America."

GUIDE fishes out lots of wadded newspapers.

"Almost every town in the country offers an ASL class."

"And more and more colleges nationwide are starting to offer degrees in ASL, Interpreting, and Deaf Studies."

TECHIE

What're people gonna do with a degree in ASL or Deaf Studies, huh? I'm even worried about what I'm gonna do with my interpreting degree. The pay is so small for all this work! *(aside; to the audience)* He's not easy to interpret for. I'm sorry but I'm being honest here.

*(to GUIDE)*

Hey - where are the deaf people? I don't see them anywhere. Look out in the audience. Not many deaf, are there?

*(no response)*

Most of these people don't know anything about deaf people or ASL. What's the big deal about ASL anyway? Hey - what is ASL?

GUIDE

From the bottom of the box, he pulls out a pair of long, white gloves, preferably kid gloves (not children's gloves).

He tries on the gloves and suddenly the gloves take on a life of their own. The first thing they aim for is TECHIE's neck, about to choke him. Then, the hands fly around, randomly expressing

ASL idioms, and pulling GUIDE's body all over the place. GUIDE tries to get a hold of his hands like taming a bucking bronco

The seemingly detached gloved hands do magical things. Simple signs like walking. Running. Animal legs moving. Elements of ASL poetry. A number or an ABC story.

GUIDE takes off the amazing gloves, and sets them nicely on the ASL-UNDER-CONSTRUCTION exhibit pedestal or block.

TECHIE

*(sign and voice)*

So, that's part of American Sign Language, huh? Wow – almost makes me want to be deaf.

GUIDE

In the manner of “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?”

That's it! Let's ask the audience, “Who wants to be deaf?”

TECHIE

Yes! Let's ask the audience, “Who wants to be deaf?”

He vocalizes game show music while turning on his flashlight to swing it around like Hollywood lights.

GUIDE brings over The ORAL DEAF chair. TECHIE takes out a pair of soundproof earphones.

## GUIDE

Let's see who among the signing impaired will become our first contestant. Whoever raises his hand first and answers the question correctly will get the Hot Seat. Are you ready?

Question – Helen Keller overcame which of the following terrible afflictions?

## GUIDE

*(gestures A-C graphically)*

- A) Baldness
- B) Flatulence
- C) Incontinence
- D) Deafness & blindness
- E)

What is your name, please?

## TECHIE

*(voice)*

Let's see who among the signing impaired will become our first contestant. Whoever raises his hand first and answers the question correctly will get the Hot Seat. Are you ready?

Question – Helen Keller overcame which of the following terrible afflictions?

## TECHIE

- A) Baldness
- B) Flatulence
- C) Incontinence
- D) Deafness & blindness

GUIDE calls on someone. TECHIE signs and voices the response. They invite the winner on stage.

*(voice)*

Your name, please?

TECHIE fingerspells fast and terrible.

## GUIDE

A big wave of applause to MAWRXNSDOZVBI! *(which is close to TECHIE's fingerspelling)*. Are you ready for the first question of "Who wants to be deaf?"

## TECHIE

*(voice)*

Ready for the first question of "Who wants to be deaf?"

After getting the proper response, they fasten the arm restraints. Hopefully at some point, the audience member will not understand the instructions and the question.

## GUIDE

The restraints are put on so that you don't get too excited. You know how people get during game shows. If you answer all three questions correctly, we will give you a very sweet reward.

Now, here's the first question:

Who invented the baseball signs of "Strike", "Out", and "Safe"?

- A) Calvin Ripken, Jr.
- B) Babe Ruth
- C) Joe Umpire
- D) Dummy Hoy

## GUIDE

What's the matter? Don't you want to play? Oh, you can't hear? I'm so sorry! What a shame. Don't you want to be deaf?? Ha-ha-ha. Bad joke. All right, we'll let you cheat and listen to the question...

## TECHIE

The restraints are put on so that you don't get too excited. You know how people get during game shows. If you answer all three questions correctly, we will give you a very sweet reward. Now here's the first question:

TECHIE puts the headphones over the audience member's head. He merely interprets by moving his lips with no sound.

GUIDE rapidly fires the baseball question.

## TECHIE

What's the matter? Don't you want to play? Oh, you can't hear? I'm so sorry! What a shame. Don't you want to be deaf?? Ha-ha-ha. Bad joke. All right, we'll let you cheat and listen to the question...

GUIDE repositions the headphones so the audience member can hear. They repeat the question. If incorrect, GUIDE helps out by emphasizing his fourth finger (the answer).

If correct, GUIDE urges a wave of applause.

## GUIDE

Now, the next question... here we go:

Who invented the football huddle?

- A) The Chicago Bears
- B) O.J. Simpson
- C) The Three Stooges
- D) The Gallaudet University Deaf Football team

## GUIDE

And, now for the bonus question which if you answer correctly will win you the lovely little gold I-Love-You pin.

Why were black spots put on a soccer ball?

- a) to make it easy for soccer players to see which way the ball spins
- b) European soccer players tend to be color blind
- c) black soccer players demanded to see some black on an all-white ball
- d) the designer of the original soccer ball had a deaf dalmation named, Spot, whom he wanted to memorialize after his dog died.

## TECHIE

*(voice)*

Now, the next question...here we go:

Who invented the football huddle?

- A) The Chicago Bears
- B) O.J. Simpson
- C) The Three Stooges
- D) The Gallaudet University Deaf Football team

If the audience member answers correctly, GUIDE milks for more applause.

## TECHIE

And, now for the bonus question which if you answer correctly will win you the lovely, little gold I-LOVE-YOU pin.

Why were black spots put on a soccer ball?

- a) to make it easy for soccer players see to which way the ball spins
- b) European soccer players tend to be color blind
- c) black soccer players demanded to see some black on an all-white ball
- d) the designer of the original soccer ball had a deaf dalmation named Spot, whom he wanted to memorialize after his dog died.

GUIDE leads the audience member towards the “correct” answer. More applause. Then, they reveal that the answer was wrong. TECHIE unfastens the restraints. GUIDE dips his hands into a bag of M&M’s and dumps a pile into the audience member’s hands, causing him to spill some on the floor.

GUIDE

Thank you for being such a good sport. That is all for tonight. Y’all come back again tomorrow for the “Hot Seat” on “Who Wants to be Deaf?”

TECHIE

Thank you being such a good sport. That is all for tonight. Y’all come back again tomorrow for the “Hot Seat” on “Who Wants to be Deaf?”

TECHIE escorts the member off stage, and slips on an M&M. GUIDE is about to put away the “hot seat” as if the seat were indeed very hot. He sets it back down.

GUIDE

Some of you look like you don’t believe all of this. It’s all true – the football huddle, the baseball signs, the deaf dalmations (well, the soccer ball thing was false, I admit).

You know what else is true? Little deaf kids in oral schools being strapped to chairs like that. They were forced to learn to speak. If they were caught signing, their hands would get slapped or tied up to a chair. They could not leave the chair until they pronounced words correctly. When they did, a little toy monkey on the wall would clap his cymbals. Or, a kid would get some M&M candy for a reward. Still happens today around the country. Still strapped to the chair? Maybe not, but maybe so – you would never see it....

TECHIE

Man, I love [*signs I-Love-You*] that game.

GUIDE corrects him by showing him the proper way to sign LOVE. He refers to the large poster of the two 29-cent "I-LOVE-YOU" postage stamps to show

TECHIE how he misused the I-LOVE-YOU handshape.

He demonstrates the way the sign was invented by showing the "I", "L", "Y" initials on the hand and the correlation of that with the handshapes in the fingerspelling chart nearby.

He shows a range of emotions/ situations associated with this sign: on TV (I Love you, Mom!), a serious affair, a breakup, a casual goodbye, a platonic greeting, a shy confession, a lie, etc.

GUIDE gestures to the audience to be mindful of keeping the thumb up. If it's down, the whole sign completely changes to the classic "bullshit" gesture.

He looks at the signing-impaired group to see if they're with him. Just in case they're not, he gestures that he has a story that'll clarify it all.

GUIDE gestures to TECHIE to prepare the background music. GUIDE sets up an identification sign: *MOONLIGHT SONATA* — BEETHOVEN (DEAF).

GUIDE

Beethoven was deaf when he created his best music.

TECHIE

*(voicing)*

Beethoven was deaf when he created his best music. *(beat; sign & voice)*  
Yeah, I know.

GUIDE

But, I think, Beethoven didn't know he was creating "music."



TECHIE

*(voice)*

You think Beethoven didn't know he was creating music. *(sign & voice)* He knew!

GUIDE

No. He thought he was creating paintings.

TECHIE

*(sign & voice)*

You thought he was creating paintings?? *(gesture)* Get outta here!

GUIDE

Look - when Beethoven became deaf, he couldn't hear music anymore, right?

TECHIE

*(voice)*

When Beethoven became deaf, he couldn't hear music anymore. *(sign & voice)* Right!

GUIDE

So, if he couldn't hear music, what do you think was going on in his mind?

TECHIE

*(sign & voice)*

I don't know...what was going on in his mind?

GUIDE

He was painting. Up here. *(gestures to the forehead)*.

TECHIE

*(sign & voice)*

No way! He was playing music.

GUIDE

Wait a minute – this is MY culture. I know!

TECHIE

*(sign & voice)*

This is YOUR culture? What about mine? Beethoven was hearing a while.

## GUIDE

But he created his best art when he was deaf -- paintings.

## TECHIE

*(voicing)*

But he created his best art when he was deaf – paintings... *(sign & voice)*. Impossible.

## GUIDE

Watch....

Gives a beautiful, in-depth ASL demonstration of music as a painting.

TECHIE voice interprets.

And, now I would like to show you a little scenario – a classic example of how Deaf people play with sign language. It’s been passed down from many generations of deaf families. We call it: “Puppet Paws”

GUIDE goes into the "I-Love-You/Bullshit" hand puppet sketch. This is a bare-bones sketch with no props or costume accessories. One hand represents the male and the other the female. TECHIE vocalizes the sound effects of this scenario.

*(I-Love-you/Bullshit gesture scenario; with melodrama)*

The male and female stand apart, avoiding each other. The man sneaks a look over to see if she's looking at him. He looks away. She sneaks a glance at him. He quickly looks back and she looks away. Finally, they catch each other’s eyes. He steps in closer to her and shyly signs ILY [I-Love-You]. She stares at him. He withdraws the ILY slowly. She signs, Bullshit! He's flabbergasted. ILY! he says. She sniffs and says Bullshit in an offhand way. He walks away upset. She looks over at him. Starts to feel sorry for him. She moves in towards him. While he's not quite looking, she confesses, ILY. He does a double-take. Skeptically, he signs, Bullshit. She shakes her head indicating "really", and signs ILY. He laughs and signs Bullshit! She becomes offended and walks away. He taunts her: Bullshit! Bullshit! Bullshit! She looks sharply at him and smacks his "face" (hand). The smack makes his thumb flick out changing the Bullshit sign to the ILY sign. He gets pissed and retaliates with a smack back. Her thumb flicks out changing her Bullshit to ILY. She's surprised her hand shows ILY. He notices his shows the same thing too. They look at each other and suddenly become soft and forgiving. They draw close.

The two ILY's begin to touch each other. They rub in circles, slowly and passionately. He pulls down her sleeve and she pulls down his. They fall to the floor rolling around, making love. GUIDE looks at his entangled arms and then to the audience, embarrassed. He ends the scenario by moving both of his arms behind him to hide it all.

He cues TECHIE to display the PUPPET PAWS sign.

#### GUIDE

Here is another classic example preserved for many years in our culture. . . .

On to the next exhibit, The SHOO FLY SOUP. TECHIE brings on props for this sketch.

While GUIDE takes off his jacket and sets his arms up, TECHIE changes the background music to a tune that typically accompanies silent films.

He reveals a three-part label for the music: SILENT/FILM/MUSIC. He gets them mixed up, unsure of the proper word order...is it Silent Music Film? Film Silent Music? Music Silent Film? Music Film Silent?

Next, he assists GUIDE with the props in this hand puppet sketch done in a similar manner to "I-Love-You/Bullshit".

#### GUIDE

*(Chaplinesque)*

A slovenly customer with ultra-thick glasses enters the cafe. He reads the sign that lists "SHOO-FLY SOUP" as the special of the day. He looks around but doesn't see a waiter. He knocks on the table.

A sophisticated waiter wearing a black bow tie comes slowly up an elevator. On his head [the hand, actually] is a folded linen napkin. With a flick of the wrist the napkin gets tossed in the air and the waiter catches it. He snaps it open and puts it on the customer [use wristwatch band to insert napkin].

The customer points to the special. The waiter bows and goes down the elevator. He returns with a bowl of soup and leaves.

The customer sips from the bowl. He silently howls in pain from the soup being too hot.

He raps on the table for the waiter. He gestures that the soup is too hot. The waiter makes an odd move and produces an Oriental fan [or a little electric hand fan]. He cools off the soup.

The waiter leaves. The customer drinks the soup. It's too cold now. He knocks on the table again.

The waiter comes. He's told the soup is too cold. The waiter does another strange move and comes up with a Butane lighter. He warms up the soup using the lighter like a blow torch. The waiter leaves.

The customer finally enjoys the soup, lapping and slurping it up. Suddenly, he feels something in his mouth and spits it back into the bowl. He tries to shoo away the fly but it won't leave. He knocks for the waiter. He gestures that there's a fly in his soup.

The waiter nods, leaves, and comes back with a fly swatter. He swats the bowl splashing water all over the place. Then, he scoops the dead fly out and flicks it away. Satisfied, he is about to leave when the customer gestures that he wants the Mile High Creme Pie for dessert.

The waiter leaves and returns with a plate of whipped cream. He also hands the customer an oversized check with dollar bill symbols on one side and a check symbol on the other. The customer looks at it, flabbergasted at the high price. He complains. The waiter draws the customer's attention close to the check which is near the whipped cream. He shoves the customer's face into the plate of cream and leaves.

To signal the end, GUIDE bows both of his hands to the audience.

The hand with the customer walks away and bumps into to the FINGERSPELLING CHART. He wipes his glasses and sees it's the manual alphabet.

## GUIDE

*(one-handed signing with clean hand)*

We want to show you some fingerspelling mime but before we do that, we need to teach you manual alphabet. Excuse me...

He proceeds to clean his other hand.  
TECHIE comes over excitedly.

## TECHIE

*(sign and voice)*

I can do it, I can do it. Let me show 'em while you get cleaned up. A. . .B. .  
.C. . . D *(shows "D" mistakenly with the middle finger sticking up instead of the index finger)*.

After GUIDE wipes his fingers clean, he grabs TECHIE's middle finger and corrects him.

## TECHIE

I understand. *(with the middle finger)* D. D. D—

GUIDE corrects him once again. TECHIE goes one up on him by fingerspelling "E". GUIDE one ups him with an "F". Techie fingerspells "G". GUIDE shakes out his hands as if... "All right, you challenging me?" They pace apart, turn, and fingerspell the alphabet with both hands as fast as they can. GUIDE beats him and blows imaginary smoke away from his index finger and gives a clever little salute off his forehead.

TECHIE imitates this in a clumsy fashion and knocks his glasses off.

GUIDE challenges him to fingerspell CAT and DOG.

## TECHIE

Fingerspell cat and dog?

GUIDE demonstrates fingerspelling CAT on one hand, then DOG on the other. Next,

he fingerspells CAT with one hand while simultaneously spelling DOG on the other.

I can do that.

TECHIE manages to do this awkwardly. GUIDE applauds him with half-hearted hand waves.

#### GUIDE

With Puppet Paws, we use the whole hand to show images or stories. I'm about to show you how we can express images with just our fingers by fingerspelling a word.

*(gestures; TECHIE translates)*

For example: G - O - L - F.

With a cardboard cutout of a hand with a pointing finger on a telescopic rod, TECHIE follows the letters on the fingerspelling chart. GUIDE does the classic fingerspelling mime of a golf ball being hit by a club: G for tee, O for Ball, L for club, F for ball-in-flight (G is set on top of O; L takes aim at the ball and hits it; after being hit, O transforms to F and flies through the air. [In whatever way the ball travels and lands, there should be a transformation right into the Sign Mime story chosen by the director, the visual dramaturge, and actor playing GUIDE; it should be a classic story seen in the Deaf community – war at sea, chopping down a tree, a car chase, etc.] At the end, the lights change.

GUIDE displays a sign: SIGN-MIME.

#### GUIDE

What you just saw was a dying storytelling form of American Sign Language called: Sign Mime.

TECHIE

*(voiceover)*

What you just saw was a dying storytelling form of American Sign Language called: Sign Mime.

GUIDE

What's unique about Sign Mime is that it incorporates cinematic elements such as wide shots, medium shots, close-ups, slow motion, and so on. Sad to say, we don't see much of it anymore in Deaf culture.

TECHIE

*(voiceover)*

The unique thing about Sign Mime is that it includes cinematic elements such as wide shots, medium shots, close-ups, slow motion, and so on. Sad to say, we don't see much of it anymore in the culture of the Deaf.

He spits at the side of GUIDE's face from the pronunciation of Death.

GUIDE

Did you just say death?

TECHIE shakes his head, denying.

Anyway, you don't see this storytelling form much in deaf...

TECHIE

*(voice)*

You don't see this storytelling form much in death-

GUIDE catches him with his tongue sticking out from pronouncing the "TH". He pushes the tongue back into TECHIE's mouth. GUIDE teaches him how to pronounce the word, ironically referring to the fingerspelling chart with the letters "D" and "F" and with his own handshapes of "D" and "F".

After not being successful with this little instruction, GUIDE produces a pair of scissors. TECHIE sees that he will lose his tongue if he pronounces death one more time.

TECHIE

DEAF! DEAF! Deafdeafdeafdeafdeafdeafdeaf.

GUIDE gives him a cookie or a piece of candy.

The phone rings. GUIDE glares at the phone. He gestures for TECHIE to go answer it.

TECHIE

Hello? OWWW—

He quickly holds out the receiver to protect his ears from the irritating noise. He gestures it's a tty call.

It's for that thing over there.

GUIDE orders TECHIE to bring over the large Model 32 teletypewriter with the INTERNATIONAL TTY symbol on its back. TECHIE pushes the very heavy piece of machinery, almost getting a hernia from the process.

GUIDE puts the receiver into the machine's coupler and types.

TECHIE

Shows the audience the TTY symbol.

*(signing and voicing)*  
This is a Braille machine.

GUIDE gestures emphatically that it is not Braille. He gets the TTY sign – TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICE FOR THE DEAF (a.k.a. TDD or TTY) – and sets it on the machine. He zips TECHIE's lips and orders him not to interpret.



## GUIDE

*(to the audience)*  
My father...

Gestures that his father is on the phone. He gestures to TECHIE to write what he signed on the blackboard. TECHIE writes: “His Dad...”

The long, slow typing goes on and on.

...signing impaired.

TECHIE writes: “...signing impaired.

...typing impaired.

TECHIE writes: “...typing impaired.

H-o-w i-s t-h-e t-o-u-r?

TECHIE writes: “How is the tour.”  
GUIDE hangs up and tears off the long sheet of paper. TECHIE looks to see if there’s more to write. GUIDE gestures “that’s all – go put the tty away.”

He orders TECHIE to begin setting up the cochlear implant demonstration.

He orders TECHIE to put the TTY back.

GUIDE goes over to open THE HEARING KIT. He pulls out a cassette tape and gestures to TECHIE: “What’s this?”

## TECHIE

*(sign and voice)*  
Oh, that’s operating room music. To help you relax during the operation.

GUIDE gestures he can’t hear it. When TECHIE plays Joe Jackson’s *Is She Really Going Out With Him?* and establishes a catchy rhythm, GUIDE

can't help but get caught up in the rhythm and vibrations. As they prepare for the surgical demo, both do a wild and wacky dance. Every time the line, "If my eyes don't deceive me, there's something going wrong around here", comes up, TECHIE signs along with it in perfect sync. GUIDE may copy signing the lines, if he's into it.

GUIDE flips a roll of yellow CAUTION tape to TECHIE who marks off the area where they'll do the cochlear implant demonstration.

TECHIE displays the sign: COCHLEAR EAR IMPLANT DEMONSTRATION and sets it up.

GUIDE displays a sign that reads: THREE-YEAR-OLD DEAF CHILD [with an arrow on it]. He points the sign to the hanging photo of the surgeon with the drill and also to the melon and the ear model.

TECHIE pulls out a surgical gown, rubber gloves, goggles, a face mask, and helps GUIDE put them on. All of the surgical tools come from the suitcase.

While GUIDE puts on his surgical attire, TECHIE shows the following banners:

- AS POPULAR AS BREAST IMPLANTS

- PROVEN SUCCESSFUL ON MONKEYS AND RATS

- HOSPITALS AVERAGE 5 IMPLANTS A WEEK

GUIDE turns the melon around to reveal the eyes, nose, mouth of a young child drawn on it. He draws an ear on one side. He gestures to the audience that the poor child is deaf. Using the ear model, he points out the cochlea, which is the area they will operate on.

He cues TECHIE to hand him an ear. TECHIE, who has disappeared behind the suitcase, rummaging through it, comes up with a large rubber ear.

GUIDE demonstrates to the audience that the ear mark on the melon is where the ear will go. He draws a circle around the drawn ear to indicate where the incision will be made.

He sharpens an old-fashioned barbershop razor on a strop. TECHIE adds shaving cream around the drawn ear. GUIDE shaves the foam off.

TECHIE hands GUIDE a scalpel. GUIDE begins to make an incision.

TECHIE

OWWWW!

GUIDE realizes he forgot to administer anesthesia. TECHIE takes out a jumbo hypodermic needle and accidentally jabs it through GUIDE's HAND.

GUIDE

OWWWW!

GUIDE pulls the needle out of his hand and then injects it into the melon. He breathes a big sigh of relief that coincides with the injection.

The rest of the incision is made in a circular fashion. With forceps he plucks the melon piece out and hands it to TECHIE who nods in approval.

TECHIE hands GUIDE a large, old-fashioned hand drill. When he cranks the drill, the bit goes around wild and erratic not even close to the mark. GUIDE gestures: "Not this one. Get me the other one."

TECHIE produces a cordless drill with a 2-3 inch diameter bit. GUIDE begins to drill partway into the melon but it spins around. TECHIE comes over and helps steady it. Bits of melon and juice fly out while the hole is made.

GUIDE sticks his finger in the hole and tastes it. Pleased, he gets TECHIE to do the same. Both agree it tastes perfect.

TECHIE gets out a "D" cell battery. GUIDE takes it and drops it down in the melon hole.

TECHIE hands him the ear. GUIDE realizes in horror that they've drilled on the wrong side of the "head". He flips the melon upside down and gets the ear to match the proper side. He then nails the ear over the hole. The song ends.

Both shake hands at their success. GUIDE takes off his surgical attire.

Now, both become audiologists. A quick-and-dirty hearing test is performed by them making various noises: blowing a whistle, rattling a noise-maker, tooting birthday horns, clapping hands, stomping feet, shaking a baby rattler, and finally, each popping paper bag in unison.

After not getting a response, GUIDE picks up the melon and dumps it in the waste can.

They go to the blackboard and flip it over to the other side which has the following table drawn up:

SUCSESSES/FAILURES. Under FAILURES, lots of counting marks and slashes in groups of fives. Under SUCSESSES, only two marks. GUIDE adds another mark under FAILURES.

The phone rings/flashs again. Both look at it. They do nothing for a while. GUIDE nods to TECHIE to answer it.

TECHIE

Hello? Uh-huh, yes he is.

Gestures it's for GUIDE. He also gestures it's not a tty call but a voice one.

GUIDE impulsively goes to the bust but remembers that he threw the hearing aid away.

He goes to the receiver, which TECHIE holds out to him. GUIDE signs obscenities to it. There's no voicing or interpreting. Shocked, TECHIE covers the mouthpiece.

GUIDE gestures that he doesn't need TECHIE for this call. He hands a slip of paper to TECHIE and gestures for him to write on the blackboard what's written on the paper. TECHIE should either erase or flip the board, and write: "Alexander Graham Bell tried to invent a device that would help his deaf wife visualize speech..."

As TECHIE writes this, GUIDE completely disassembles the phone piece by piece, wire by wire, experiencing the whole gamut of emotions from anger to indifference to pleasure.

Snatches the receiver from TECHIE. He jams the electronic parts into TECHIE's hands. TECHIE watches, horrified. He cringes at every abusive action to the telephone.

GUIDE removes the plastic housing and parts fall out: phone circuitry, a large spring, a large rubber ear, a rolling eyeball toy, and a wind-up toy of chattering teeth.

He disconnects the wall cord that's connected to the back of the unit and drops the unit.

Looks at the end of the wall plug.

Follows the cord down to the wall jack and unplugs it. Gets down to the floor and eyeballs the jack.

He plugs it up with the wad of bubble gum from his mouth.

GUIDE reads the blackboard, looks at the audience, and then finishes the sentence on the board by writing: "and he failed miserably."

Obviously upset, TECHIE goes over and looks at the phone's entrails. He gathers them in a pile and covers them with a cloth as if pulling a sheet over the dead.

GUIDE collects the pile and cloth and throws them in the wastebasket.

The telephone light, which was left alone, comes on and stays on, it does not flash.

GUIDE and TECHIE look at each other, surprised. GUIDE makes a gesture of "Oh, one more thing..." He reveals a

sign by the light: INVENTOR OF THE LIGHT BULB - THOMAS EDISON

TECHIE comes over, takes out a thick marker, and adds "(DEAF)" after EDISON. This greatly pleases GUIDE.

As they begin to exit, slapping each other on the back, TECHIE accidentally steps on a stray phone piece and crushes it. Silence. He cringes and picks it up.

Then, he shrugs and nonchalantly throws it in the waste can. GUIDE gives TECHIE a slap on the back, a handshake, a hug, or whatever to acknowledge this.

Finally, the pizza arrives. GUIDE accepts it.

TECHIE

I ordered 20-**ONE** pies for everybody, not one. Sal misunderstood me!

GUIDE

21 looks like this (*demonstrates*).

TECHIE

Oh....

GUIDE

TECHIE interprets.

Since you have been such a great audience, we would like something to remember you by as we travel from town to town.

TECHIE gets a camera with a flash (preferably a Polaroid) while GUIDE sets the audience up for the shot. The shot is taken.

We hope it was an evening for all of you. Good night, and please send money.

GUIDE signs the word “enlightening”  
with a double-meaning in ASL  
[suggestions: idea bulb, inspiration]

Both indicate their poverty. Then, they  
take a bow and exit.

**The End**