

Mr. ARHS
By Jack Doyle

As I entered the cafeteria, I could feel the static of excitement in the air. I was instantly immersed in it and my heart began to beat a couple steps faster. The stage stood at the front of the room, and the rest of it was filled with rows of chairs. Being a freshman, this was my first Mr. ARHS. I found my seat with some friends and sat waiting for the show to begin. As I was waiting, I noticed Billy Mason and Ms. Morrison standing next to the stage, trying feverously to get someone's attention. They kept waving their hands and pointing, apparently trying to get someone to notice them. As I watched them perform their own little charades show for a minute or two, I soon realized that it seemed like they were talking to someone in my area of seating. I looked around me, hoping that I might be able to help by figuring out whom they were signaling to and getting their attention for them. But as I looked around, it didn't appear to be anyone around me. After some quick deducing, a thought popped into my head. Could it be me they were trying to reach? No way, I thought, it's never me. If I've learned anything from all those awkward moments of mistaking waves and pleasantries directed to the person behind me as my own, it's that it is never me. At this point, Ms. Morrison and Billy were waving so violently that I thought pulled muscles and possible hernias could start to become a concern. I figured that no one was watching so I might as well explore the possibility of me being the sought after party. I looked around, raised my index finger to my chest, and mouthed the word "Me?" Billy and Ms. Morrison let out a sigh and nodded; wearing the facial expressions of two dog owners that just potty trained an incredibly difficult puppy.

As I got up and made my way over to them, I began to ponder how stupid I must have looked, and was convinced that I would play it cool from there on out.

"Hey Jack, we need you to help us out with something," Ms. Morrison said cheerfully.

"Ok, no problem," I replied, while in my head commending myself on making through the first lines of the conversation without looking stupid. "What do you need?" I asked, ready for whatever task of minor physical labor I was sure was about to come to me.

"Well," Ms. Morrison started, "We need you to dance."

"Uhh...excuse me?" I replied, shattering all hope I had of achieving my lofty goal of seeming the least bit articulate.

"Come with us, we'll explain."

As Ms. Morrison led me back stage to help me understand what I had gotten myself into, we entered what appeared to be where all the magic of Mr. ARHS happened. Behind the stage, there were people running back and forth with an air of duty and the floor was covered with wires, spreading from the back of a laptop in the middle like roots from an ancient willow. The place seemed like it belonged in a Tom Clancy novel, and I decided it would be best if I kept a look out for Soviets just in case. Ms. Morrison weaved in and out of the bustle like she was Jeff Gordon at the Indy 500, while I struggled feebly trying to keep up. At one point I ran into a small upperclassman girl with Happy Potter glasses. My shoulder caught her square in the chest, and caused her to give a more masculine grunt than expected. For a second we both stood there in an

awkward silence. Recovering far quicker than I, she shot me a look as though I had just defecated in her breakfast and went on her way, leaving me to mumble an apology to the spot where she used to be.

Once we reached the far rear of the back stage area, Ms. Morrison brought me to Mr. Hreschuk, who was hosting the event.

"Is this him?" Mr. Hreschuk asked.

"He sure is," replied Ms. Morrison as I nodded along, hoping to seem like I knew what was happening. We introduced ourselves, and he began to explain the plan.

"When you hear the words, 'How about a little techno music', we need you to burst out of your chair like you just can't hold in the urge to dance, and run onstage and start dancing," explained Mr. Hreschuk.

"Hmm," I said as I continued to nod, as though I was asked to do this all the time, since I was still attempting to play it cool. "So...I just dance?" I asked.

"Yep that's it, just do your thing," said Mr. Hreschuk, forever marking the point in time in which I found out I had a "thing". "Don't worry, you'll be fine," he assured me.

After the quick brief on my new task, I headed back to my seat with my friends, trying to play it cool as to not give away my newest secret. To ask to the pressures of the night, I had to find a way to finagle an isle seat from my friends without giving up my surprise role in the show. Since I could not think of any other reason for needing a specific seat, I cleverly told my isle-seated friend, "I just need it," prompting her to assume that I was simply a pain in the ass, which due to past events, was not that difficult to believe.

Soon after, the lights lowered and the show began. I sat in my seat, twitching nervously, and waiting for the right lines to beckon me onto the stage. As I waited, doubt began to fill me. I kept thinking about how stupid I was about to look. I can't do this, this is a bad idea, I kept thinking to myself. I couldn't help but imagine the thought of myself standing alone on stage and hearing nothing but crickets.

Towards the end of the show, when I didn't think I could stand the anticipation anymore, the time came. All of a sudden I heard the words, "How about a little techno music," and I knew that regardless of whether or not I was ready, it was my time to shine.

As I heard the music begin to play, I burst from my seat with as much enthusiasm as I could muster. The spotlight hit me as I rose, and I jumped, jiggled, and gyrated my way to the stage, trying to keep time with the music. I reached the top of the stage and was greeted by the screams of some of my classmates.

At this point the adrenaline was pumping, I was dancing as I'd never danced before. My body bounced up and down with the elegance of an intoxicated gorilla. My limbs flared wildly as I tried to imitate moves I had seen on MTV, only making me look like I was warding off a swarm of bees. I became consumed with the music and lost all consciousness of the audience. Before I knew what was happening, I had danced my way back to my seat and was listening to the sound of the audience applaud, making me glad that this time, it was me.