



# 10-Minute ARG--The Mime Academy

## Overview

No doubt you've seen them. Silent, wiry people in white face, trapped in an invisible boxes, pulling on invisible ropes, climbing invisible stairs. Who are these people? Why are they doing this? Unsurprisingly, it's an international conspiracy. The Mime Academy pulls back the curtain to reveal the horror and the tragedy of Mimes. How they are kidnapped into white-face slavery. How they live in squalid conditions, controlled by a handler who takes most of their money and turns them daily back onto the street to earn more. And about the MasterMime, the evil genius who controls the Mime Empire.

## Story

Oswald was a regular guy from Minnesota who always wanted to make people laugh. He was saving up for the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Clown School when he saw an ad. LEARN TO BE A MIME it said, and FREE. He saw it as a stepping stone towards his dream of becoming a clown. So he signed up. At the first class, he and his classmates were herded into a van and driven to California where their clothes were taken away and they were dressed and made-up as Mimes. Now he lives in the dark and dirty underworld of mimedom. He puts up a website, in code, of course, because if his handler finds out what he's done, Oswald will be beaten (Mime make-up hides bruises so well). Oswald needs your help to escape.

What you find out about Oswald sends you to the website of the sinister Mime Institute, run by the man known only as the Master Mime. Can you free Oswald without putting yourself in danger? Or are you at risk of being thrown in a van, driven to a place where tourists swarm, dressed as a mime, and thrown onto the streets to work under the watchful eye of a handler?

## Design

### **Rabbithole**

The live rabbithole can take many forms depending on the situation, but will always covertly or overtly lead to [www.internationalmimeacademy.com](http://www.internationalmimeacademy.com).

### **X-0000 Torn Mime Shirt and Puzzle Box**

Clear box puzzle containing a rolled up bit of black/white striped material with the URL [www.internationalmimeacademy.com](http://www.internationalmimeacademy.com) written on it in magic marker. This leads players to the



first site...

## International Mime Academy

### IMA- 0000 Website (NEW)

URL: internationalmimeacademy.com

This is the main website for the International Mime Academy. It's very slick, high-education, semi classy, but all with a smarmy French mime edge. It looks very real, at least at first glance. It has links to a **Home page**, an **About Us** Page, a **History** page and a **Contact Us** page.

### IMA-0001 Home Page Text

#### Home Page

The International Mime Academy is the oldest academy of its type. It has branches all over the world. Here there are no gimmicks, no foolishness. We focus on the classic art of mime. Other schools will use music and strange colors of make-up. We will teach you from the ground up. Silence. Whiteface. The true French classic style. Learn the real art of the mime.

### IMA-0002 Home Page Photo

Prominent on the home page is a stock photo of the Academy:



### IMA-0003 About Us Page Text

#### About Us

We are a band of dedicated artists who work tirelessly, yes tirelessly to keep alive the ancient discipline of the classic mime performance. We believe that a world without mimes is a world



without culture, without spirit, without meaning. Led by our brilliant Director, the MasterMime, we dedicate ourselves to spreading the art and discipline of our tradition throughout the world.

#### **IMA-0004 About Us Page Photo**

Prominent on the home page is this photo:



#### **IMA-0005 History Page Text**

##### **History**

We are an ancient discipline. There is evidence of Mimes in the carvings of Egyptian tombs, where mimes are shown entertaining the Pharaohs. The discipline has been carefully handed down across the centuries. During the French Revolution, it appeared, with the death of Jean Robert Leveque, Mime to Louis XIV, that the tradition had been lost, but during the Second Empire, a mysterious Mime became a sensation at court. His son founded The International Mime Institute in 1892 to teach the ancient discipline. That man was the great-grandfather of the current director, known to his adoring students as the MasterMime.

#### **IMA-0006 History Page Photo**

Prominent on the home page is this photo:



## IMA-0007 Contact Us Page Text

### Contact Us

We hold free introductory classes in the art and bodily discipline of traditional mime in cities all over the world. [Contact us](mailto:link to IMA-0003) [mailto: link to IMA-0003] for information on how you, too, can start on this amazing career, and by so doing, dedicate yourself to the ancient art of the mime.

For more information, call 310-362-1805 s'il vous plait.  
[Insert international number when available]

## IMA-0008 About Us Page Photo

Prominent on the home page is this photo:



**IMA-0009 Email account**

headmistress@internationalmimeacademy.com

**IMA-0010 Email autoreply content**

The Contact Us page includes an email address. Clicking the mailto: link lets players send an email, to which they get an immediate autoreply from the headmaster or the academy, thanking them for their interest, or something. It should be funny and satirical.

At the bottom of the email is a signature, which includes a phone number (the Academy is located somewhere in the US, and has a regular phone number with an area code that corresponds to this location).

Thank you for your interest in the International Mime Academy. We are certain that we will have a class in your area at the soonest. Are you tired of working in the dull job? Be your own boss! Becoming a Mime is your way to the fame and fortune!

The International Mime Institute

310-362-1805

[insert international number here]

**X-0001 Academy Phone number**

**310-362-1805 (Phone number w/voicemail, Script, Audio)**

This is the phone number for the Academy. When a player calls, their Caller ID will be logged and temporarily stored in a database for a callback at a later time.



### Script for Greeting

This is the script for the greeting for the International Mime Academy phone line. It begins as a very simple, satirical outgoing message by someone with a thick French accent, with accordion music in the background.

About 10 or 15 seconds in, the message suddenly gets "hacked" by someone who says that they desperately need help, the academy is not what it seems, and that they don't know how long this message will be there before someone notices and removes it. It's a classic "help me I'm being held prisoner in a fortune cookie factory" message.

As part of the message, this poor person gives a clue that points players to the next step, a website, [aterriblethingtowaste.com](http://aterriblethingtowaste.com) (maybe he can say that "I used to think that a mime was a **terrible thing to waste**. Now I know that a mime is just a terrible thing"). He says if you go there, he's hidden some very important information as to his whereabouts.

Receptionist  
(heavy bad French accent)

Thank you for calling the International Mime Academy. And if you are wondering why it is that I am talking if this is the Mime Academy, that is neither as clever or as amusing as you apparently think. If you are interested in information...(fuzzes out)

Oswald

Don't do it, it's a trap. A horrible trap. I used to think that a mime was a terrible thing to waste. Now I know a mime is just a terrible thing. They've got me, and I need your help. Find my website. A terrible thing to waste. A terrible thing.

### A Terrible Thing to Waste

#### TT- 0000 New Website

URL: [aterriblethingtowaste.com](http://aterriblethingtowaste.com)

#### TT-0001 Text for site

Text and puzzle. This is Oswald's website/blog, (a play on a Mime is a Terrible Thing to Waste), and it's a pretty simple one-page site. It's a combination of the beautiful and the seedy, of illusion and reality. It's also a simple puzzle that leads to a YouTube account with one video, where Oswald explains what's really going on (via a webpage or a "smuggled out" camera phone video, depending on what we can make). See above for story details.

There will also be links to various mime appreciation sites, mime blogs, etc on the sidebar, along with your typical tag cloud, which can include some funny stuff.



There are two entries:

### **Chasing a Dream**

Posted by Oswald on May 13, 2009

From the time I was a kid, I've always wanted to be a clown. My plan was to go to Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Clown College. The tuition is free but I found out they had closed in 1997.

It would have been a great place. Penn Jillette of Penn & Teller went there.

So I figured I would have to create my own 'school of clowndom.' I think that to be a clown it's important to be a natural performer and to pick up techniques, like acrobatics and juggling.

That's what I'm trying to do with my life now.

### **First Steps for Finding My Inner Mime!**

Posted by Oswald on May 1, 2009

I found a great class. It's called, "Finding Your Inner Mime" and it's offered for free! I've been thinking about my life, and while Radio Hack has been okay to me, it hasn't really fulfilled my dreams. It's time to take some positive steps. I'm not expecting a free class on being a mime to get me a job in a the circus, but it's better than sitting on my hind end doing nothing.

So I started this blog to encourage me (and maybe readers) to pursue their goals. I'll tell you about the highs and lows of my journey. Someday, I'll be a clown.

Puzzle element: With the text on the page, certain letters are in **bold**. In order, these bolded letters spell out YOUTUBEOSWALDTHEMIME. This leads players to [www.youtube.com/oswaldthemime](http://www.youtube.com/oswaldthemime) ...

### **TT-0003 Photo Asset (stock)**

This is a stock photo that will be inserted in the May 13<sup>th</sup> entry. It is of a creepy looking clown or clown doll.





### **TT-0004 Photo Asset (custom)**

This is a stock photo that will be inserted in the May 13<sup>th</sup> entry. It's a picture of Oswald in full mime regalia.



### **Oswald's YouTube Account**

#### **YT-0000 Oswald's help video (YouTube)**

This video is the only video that shows up in the YouTube account for Oswald The Mime.

INT DAY The Mime Apartment

A bare apartment, with a mattress on the floor and some clothes scattered about. (Or alternately, a corner of a room, with bare walls behind, in fairly tight on Oswald so it looks as if he's in some dim and seedy place.) Oswald is speaking furtively. He is wearing a striped mime shirt and perhaps the remnants of mime whiteface. He is sweaty and scared.

#### **OSWALD**

My name is Oswald. I manage a Radio Hack in St. Paul, Minnesota...or at least I did. I just wanted to make people laugh. I saw this flyer for a free Mime class and I went there. There were two other people there and they loaded us into a van and blindfolded us and drove us for days. They taught us the basics, you know? The invisible rope. The invisible box. And then they made us go out into the streets and mime for spare change. It was horrible! They have a quota. They say if we don't meet the quota, then they'll beat us. They say they're gonna sell us to a guy in the Seychelles, and then I'll never see sweet home Minnesota again.

Oh! They all report to a guy called the Master Mime! They say he has eyes everywhere!

There's a sound, voices outside the door.



## OSWALD

If anybody out there hates mimes as much as I do, please, please help me.

There's another sound, voices outside the door.

They're coming! The door is locked with some sort of bicycle lock, a (reads) "kryptonite evolution 2000." Please! If anyone out there knows how to open one of these locks, email me. Oswald at my website!

### **TT-0005 Email and Autoreply**

Oswald@aterriblethingtowaste.com

### **TT-0006 Autoreply content**

Players Google "kryptonite evolution 2000" and find that it can be opened with a Bic pen! They send an email to [Oswald@aterriblethingtowaste.com](mailto:Oswald@aterriblethingtowaste.com) that mentions a Bic pen. Once the players successfully do this, they get an autoreply that says thank you for helping me get out of here!

Thank you! Thank you! I'm on my way home to St. Paul! You've saved me. If you're ever in St. Paul, look me up. I'll set you up with a good cheap cell phone from Radio hack or maybe one of those remote controlled monster trucks. Anyway. Words can't say enough.

Oswald.

### **X-0002 Broadcast Phone call**

At this point, we trigger a phone call to everyone in the room. It's the Master Mime!

MASTERMIME

(bad French accent)

So, you think you've defeated me, do you? You think you have saved poor little Oswald. I am not done with you yet, my friend. Any time you see a mime, I am there, and I am watching you! One day, when you least expect it, we will snatch you. Then, as part of my army of mimes, you will help me rule the world! [evil laugh].