

PLOT SUMMARY

PHONY is a technological musical about a pair of old friends: a burner phone and a flip phone. Burner cannot hold their secrets any longer. Flip tries to rekindle their friendship after their abandonment. They live in a world that communicates through telepathy. PHONY packs some imposter syndrome-related themes from identity, real/fake friendships, and social interactions.

As teenagers, Burner and Flip often made ruckus at Mute Theatre. The staff eventually had enough and chased them down. They catch Flip, who snitches. Burner runs away and soon is taken in by Smart @. Due to Burner's ability to keep secrets and block out any telepathy, @ trains them to be a confidante for their new religious movement, Smart Operating System (SOS). The Smart family has long been the "voice" of the Tech Giants.

In the present day, @ is succeeded by their child: Iota. Iota initiates "the Phone Plan" which has SOS going viral, a computer virus-level sensation. An informant soon obtains insurmountable evidence of SOS's frauds. If revealed, the government will legislate an update that will put a pause on SOS's operations. Because Burner is untraceable, Iota tasks them with hosing down this informant at a gathering called "Group Text." When Burner approaches the informant on a balcony, they realize it is their childhood friend. They reconnect. Soon, a cop approaches this uninvited guest. Flip pushes Burner into the waters below.

In the following act, the Tech Giants tower over Burner and voice their disdain for SOS's bastardization of their morals. Elsewhere, Flip is conflicted and does not provide full details of their findings to any journalist. Soon, Burner wakes up in rice. Rotary saved their life. Rotary revisits a friendship in their life with Push-Button, who pushed their buttons too many times. Burner decides to go find Flip before Smart does.

Meanwhile, Smart assumes Flip has killed their longtime family friend. Smart sends their crazed followers after Flip and news outlets, setting the world ablaze with hotlines. Burner gets their antenna in the alert system and relays the message of SOS's corruption to everyone. Many followers realize they have lost everything due to Smart and their associates. As a mob prepares to crack Burner, Flip saves them. However, Flip gets their backs broken in the process and permanently turns off.

In the end, Burner spends time behind low bars or poor signals. They then turn their life around and become a defense attorney. Elsewhere, as the arbiter of truth, Flip becomes a Tech Giant.