

40 STAT. 76

by Arlene Hutton

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CAST

GILLIAN, 20's, a law student.

ETHAN, 20's, her good friend, a law student.

TORY, 20's, his girlfriend, a law student who works at the local coffee house.

PLACE

An apartment in grad student housing at a major university.

TIME

Tomorrow.

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(An apartment suite in grad school housing at a law school. An open laptop is on a table. Two students, GILLIAN and ETHAN, are looking at a letter and envelope. The dialogue overlaps.)

	GILLIAN	
It's a joke.		
	ETHAN	GILLIAN
It's not a joke.		It's a joke.
	ETHAN	
Looks pretty official to me.		
	GILLIAN	
You are so gullible.		
	ETHAN	GILLIAN
Am not.		Don't become a defense attorney.
	ETHAN	
I need a beer.		
	GILLIAN	ETHAN
You can't believe this--		--and lunch.
	GILLIAN	ETHAN
It's not even like--		What?
	GILLIAN	
Like not even...on the right kind of paper.		
	ETHAN	
How would you know--		
	GILLIAN	ETHAN
It's a hoax.		--what kind of paper--
	GILLIAN	
That is xerox paper. Look at it. It's xerox paper.		
	ETHAN	
Why couldn't it be on xerox paper?		
	GILLIAN	
It should look like, like, jury duty. Like a jury duty notice.		
	ETHAN	
Oh.		
	GILLIAN	
Is Tory bringing lunch today?		
	ETHAN	
She always brings lunch.		

GILLIAN
Only if she's working.

ETHAN
She's always working.

GILLIAN
Do you just date her just for free food?

ETHAN
You think I like tofu? You think I like hummus? (*He looks at the paper again.*)

GILLIAN
Maybe she'll bring chicken salad today.

ETHAN
My social security number is on this. That's my social security number.

GILLIAN
Stupid, anybody can get your sosh if they really want to.

ETHAN
Yeah. Maybe somebody stole my identity.

GILLIAN
Stole your identity?

ETHAN
Yeah. Identity theft.

GILLIAN
As if.

ETHAN
I need lunch.

GILLIAN
As if somebody would want to be you.

ETHAN
Somebody might want my credit cards.

GILLIAN
Maxed out.

ETHAN
You don't take me seriously.

GILLIAN
I can't take this seriously. Think about it. Your name. Your sosh. Sent to you. Sent to you.

ETHAN
This looks like my uncle's. My uncle has one. He kept his. From the sixties. I've seen it. Looks just like it. Looks exactly like my uncle's. I think. Except for the paper.

GILLIAN
Well, there you have it, then.

ETHAN
What?

GILLIAN
It's not real. It wouldn't look the same. Somebody scanned and photoshopped an old one. There. Throw it out.

ETHAN

That's illegal.

GILLIAN

Oh, please, Mr. Let's-break-every-rule-we-can.

ETHAN

Can we take this seriously for one minute? Hypothetically? Just one minute? One?

GILLIAN

Okay. It would have been on the news. Duh. On the news. Everybody would have known about it, for days, weeks, months. Duh. Blogs. Media. Duh. Figure it out. What, a secret? Oooh. Just a few good men? Let's keep it a secret?

ETHAN

What if?

GILLIAN

Duh. It's not like jury duty--

ETHAN

Okay.

*

*

GILLIAN

--where they just find you.

ETHAN

I'm gonna check online.

GILLIAN

You'd have to register or something. You'd have to register.

ETHAN

(Quietly, after a long silence.) I did.

GILLIAN

[You did] what?

ETHAN

I registered.

GILLIAN

What *[do you mean]*?

ETHAN

We all did.

GILLIAN

I didn't.

ETHAN

At my high school.

GILLIAN

What do you mean?

ETHAN

When you turn eighteen.

GILLIAN

You did not.

ETHAN

Did, too.

GILLIAN
Like there's a draft?

ETHAN
Duh.

GILLIAN
There's no draft.

ETHAN
Selective Service! Have to register. Selective Service. Don't you know anything? *(To the computer screen)* Load already. *(To GILLIAN)* It wasn't a big deal. They were like, sign this shit, like in homeroom.

GILLIAN
In homeroom?

ETHAN
They made you, like register.

GILLIAN
You're joking. What, like "drink the kool-aid" and you just did it?

ETHAN
Everybody had to.

GILLIAN
I didn't.

ETHAN
The guys. Girls don't have to.

GILLIAN
You're bull--

ETHAN
I'm serious.

GILLIAN
You're bull--

ETHAN
You don't even know?

GILLIAN
What?

ETHAN
You don't even know? You've been going to all those stupid-

GILLIAN
--not stupid --

ETHAN
--war protests --

GILLIAN
--not stupid --

ETHAN
You've been going to all those meetings and you don't even know what the Selective Service Act is. *(He looks at his computer screen)*

GILLIAN
There's no Selective--

ETHAN
(Cutting her off.) There certainly is.

GILLIAN
The draft ended in, what, uh, when--

ETHAN
'73. Nixon. The draft ended. Not registration.

GILLIAN

No, registration ended, too.

ETHAN

Not 'til Ford, '75. Then it was reinstated.

GILLIAN

No.

ETHAN

(Typing) Wikipedia. Selective Service.

GILLIAN

When?

ETHAN

1980. We weren't even born. Under Carter. *(To GILLIAN)* Men have to register when they turn eighteen. *(He clicks on the keyboard.)* Google. *(He types.)*

GILLIAN

(Sarcastic) It's like they keep it secret?

ETHAN

How could you not know that?

ETHAN *(cont'd)*

--You're in law school.

GILLIAN

No. You're bull--

*

*

ETHAN *(cont'd)*

You're like in law school and you don't even know about Selective Service? *(He types.)*

GILLIAN

It's not like they advertise.

ETHAN

If you don't register you can't get financial aid. You can't get student loans. *(He shows her the screen.)* W. W. W. dot S. S. S. dot gov. See? *(He reads from the screen.)* "If you are a man ages 18 through 25 and living in the U.S., then you must register with Selective Service. It's the law." See?

GILLIAN

Okay. So I didn't know.

ETHAN

Do girls like have a gene that doesn't connect with registering for the draft?

GILLIAN

Okay, so I didn't know.

ETHAN

You've been going to all those war protests--

GILLIAN

Yes, I do go to --

ETHAN

(Interrupting.) You've been going to all those war protests and you don't even know--

GILLIAN
(Overlapping) We're against--

ETHAN
(Interrupting) You guys are idiots.

GILLIAN
 Our country's at war.

ETHAN
 Protesting on streetcorners.

GILLIAN
 At least we're doing something--

ETHAN
 Standing at traffic intersections holding signs and candles --

GILLIAN
 --Hundreds of people--

ETHAN
 Hundreds?

GILLIAN
 In their cars.

ETHAN
 Like that's gonna accomplish anything?

GILLIAN
 Hundreds of cars passing by.

ETHAN
 While you and, like ten other people wave signs so people will honk at you--

GILLIAN
 They honk a lot--

ETHAN
 --in your tight little anti-war T-shirts--

GILLIAN
 --and they wave.

ETHAN
 They wave.

GILLIAN
 Yes, they do. They honk and they wave.

ETHAN
 They're honking at your honkers.

ETHAN *(cont'd)*
 Beep-beep!

GILLIAN
 At least I'm doing something. *

ETHAN
 Honk!

GILLIAN
 Stop it. *

ETHAN *(cont'd)*
 Honk, honk!

GILLIAN
 Are you done?

(ETHAN stops the teasing. He looks at the draft notice and then at the computer.)

GILLIAN (cont'd)

(A beat.) Hey. Just because you registered doesn't mean this is real.

ETHAN

(Still at the computer.) Yeah. There's nothing about it on the internet.

GILLIAN

See?

(TORY enters, carrying a couple of to-go bags. During the following dialogue TORY puts down her backpack, takes off a sweater and scarf and unpacks the wraps. ETHAN stays focused on the computer. GILLIAN gets out plates and utensils and pours drinks. TORY is very methodical in her actions, all the time speaking in a rush)

TORY

Hey!

GILLIAN

Hey, Tory.

TORY

Stupid theatre department---- Blue Moon was crazy today! I just grabbed some leftover wraps and ran. *(She gives Ethan a quick kiss)* Hi.

ETHAN

(Kissing her even while staying focused on his computer screen.) You're late.

TORY

(As she begins to unpack) Don't complain if it's hummus. Please. Don't. I can't take any more complaining today. The place was crazy. The whole theatre department was there. During the day!

GILLIAN

Did you bring chicken salad?

TORY

They never come during the daytime.

*
*

TORY (cont'd)

I don't know what I grabbed. I hope it's not hummus, but if it is I don't want to hear about it, do you hear me? Just be grateful. For whatever. For grilled veggies or tofu pesto or tuna or whatever. Even if it's hummus. Even if it's hummus. Just say, thank you for putting food on my table. Say thank you Tory for feeding us for free so we can get through law school.

GILLIAN

Thank you, Tory.

ETHAN

(Talking to the computer) Reloading. Good....

TORY

(Looking at the labels) Oh, good. No hummus. The ACT-tors must've grabbed all the hummus wraps. *(Unwrapping)* Hooray! We have ham & swiss, grilled veggie and roast beef. *(A pause.)* Roast beef!

ETHAN

(To the computer) Oh, come on. Reload already.

TORY

And Tuscan chicken.

GILLIAN

I'll take the chicken.

TORY

(To *ETHAN*) Did you hear me? I got roast beef for you. It's your lucky day.

ETHAN

My lucky day? The computer's slower than--

TORY

Don't blame me.

ETHAN

--and I got this stupid letter.

★

TORY

We're both having bad days then. I can acknowledge that. It's the planet alignment. And they shouldn't let that many theatre students in Blue Moon all at the same time.

ETHAN

(At the computer) S.S.S. Dot.....

TORY

All those Aquarians in the same room.

GILLIAN

What do you mean?

TORY

Astrological diversity.

ETHAN

(To himself, looking at the computer screen) Nothing. Okay. It's okay.

GILLIAN

Tory, what are you talking about?

TORY

(Trying to explain it to them) Astrological diversity. My study group has twelve members. Each with a different zodiac sign, so we balance each other's strengths and energies. If a person drops out they have to be replaced by somebody with their same zodiac sign. We tend to lose Gemini's, mostly--

GILLIAN

--What's that got to do with --

TORY

--That's what happened in Viet Nam--

GILLIAN

Viet Nam?

ETHAN

(Looking up from the computer) What?

★

TORY (cont'd)

(Overlapping) There was no astrological diversity. The military called up--

ETHAN

Called up?

TORY

Are you listening to me? Back in the sixties--

ETHAN

Oh.

GILLIAN

The sixties.

TORY (cont'd)

--the military called up a bunch of people with the same birthday, the same zodiac sign. So in Viet Nam all the soldiers messed up in the same ways. No other zodiac signs to balance them. The Thursday shift--

GILLIAN

(Interrupting.) Doesn't explain the current war.

ETHAN

(To Gillian.) Honk, honk. Beep, beep.

TORY

May I finish? The Thursday shift at Blue Moon is all Aires, and it's a real nightmare. But if you put an Aires with a Libra and a Pisces, well, that's a good mix. *(To ETHAN)* You're not listening to me.

ETHAN

I'm sorry. I--- *(He waves the letter.)*

TORY

(Pointing to the letter.) You got one, too?

ETHAN

What are you--

TORY

(Interrupting him.) That's all they could talk about at Blue Moon. That's what I've been telling you.

ETHAN

(To Gillian.) You said it was fake!

GILLIAN

(To Ethan.) Beep, beep. I'm an idiot, remember?

TORY

(Reading aloud.) Title 32, Chapter XVI, Sec. 1630.2 You are hereby directed to present yourself.....

(A pause. GILLIAN and TORY look at ETHAN.)

TORY *(cont'd)*

Ethan, what's going on?

ETHAN

What were people saying at Blue Moon?

TORY

I was busy. I thought they were talking about a play. I thought it was performance art. Ethan?

ETHAN

It's okay. It's the theatre students. It's okay. It's not on the website. If it were real it would be on the internet. It would be on FaceBook, on Twitter. If it were real our phones would be ringing.

GILLIAN

That's what I said. *(A pause.)* Can we eat now?

TORY

(Pointing to a sandwich.) Tuscan chicken. *(She looks in the bag for more.)*

GILLIAN

Thank you, Tory.

TORY

And day-old brownies.

GILLIAN

Yay, brownies.

TORY

(To Ethan.) Roast beef. *(No response.)* And brownies.

ETHAN

(Still staring at the computer screen.) Whatever. *(A very long pause. Ethan stares at the computer. Something on the screen changes. He jumps away, pauses and then looks closer at the screen.)* Oh, my god.

GILLIAN

What?

ETHAN

Oh, my god.

GILLIAN

What, what, what?

ETHAN

Oh, my god. Is this website real?

TORY

What is it?

ETHAN

Oh, my god. How do I know this website isn't fake! Just because it's on the...*(Typing.)* C. N. N.dot com...Shit...Oh my god. *(Reading)* "The White House announces"....

GILLIAN

What?

ETHAN

(Reading.) "The White House announces" *(Looking up at the women.)* They've reinstated the draft-----*(Back to the computer, typing.)* S. S. S. dot gov. Oh, my god. There it is. Oh, my god. There it is. They've reinstated the.... oh, my god. They've reinstated the draft! *(Silence. Then Ethan explodes.)* How could this just happen? How the hell -- How could this just, just, just happen? Didn't somebody know? Wouldn't there have been a leak or something? A blog? Like a leak on somebody's blog? Wouldn't it have been on Twitter? Shit. Shit! Shit! Don't we get to vote on this? --*(He picks up the notice and reads aloud.)* "Title 32, Chapter XVI, Sec. 1630.2 You are hereby directed to present yourself for Armed Forces Physical Examination to the Local Board named above by reporting..." *(Ethan puts down the notice as if it were poison.)* Oh, my god. *(To Tory.)* What are we gonna do?

TORY

Canada?

ETHAN

Don't we get to vote? How could this just happen?

GILLIAN

We weren't paying attention.

(GILLIAN's cellphone rings. She looks for it. Tory's cell phone rings. She fumbles around in her purse. ETHAN's cell phone rings. As they scramble to find each of their cell phones, running around, other cell phones begin to ring, There is chaos. As they find their phones and answer them, perhaps saying "hello," a chorus of cellphones, dozens, are ringing, ringing. The cellphone chorus builds and builds, louder and louder until suddenly....The cacophony of sound ends abruptly and simultaneously with a BLACKOUT. End of play.)