

**THE PLAYWRIGHT'S GUILD PRESENTS:
TROUPE 101
FINAL DRAFT**

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BRIEF INTERLUDE #1

Monique Legaspi and Ian Johnson

PROFESSOR [laughing a little]

I was a cute kid, wasn't I? [beat] WRONG! I looked nothing like that stupid little toddler. All names, appearances, and vocal timbres have been altered to protect the safety of my family. You really think I'm gonna give you my whole childhood just like that? I use three alphanumeric passcodes and a secret dance move to unlock my *bathroom door*. Granted, sometimes I don't make it. But it's the only surefire way to keep *them* out.

Enough about me, though. Let's move onto the first item of the syllabus. Have you ever wondered why the printers on campus are so slow? Now, printers are expensive to buy and maintain, sure, but keep in mind, our endowment is bigger than Cambodia's economy. And you don't see the Cambodians complaining about printers, do you? No. If the printers are slow here, it's because somebody wants them to be. [as he storms out] And *we* are going to find out *who*, and *why*.

PRINTING QUEUE

Monique Legaspi

Lights up on a place with printers (library/JStreet/etc.). There are a few chairs, some laptops, and a large PRINTER (a large box with a slit on the side, and a person inside pushing out papers), along with a few reams of blank printer paper. A stack of already printed-on paper rests on the floor in front of the PRINTER. ZOEY, a young, eager freshman (wearing her yellow frosh shirt), sits on the floor and types furiously into her laptop. She mutters to herself, occasionally shaking her head and hitting the backspace several times. Then--a burst of inspiration! She quickly types out the last few sentences, grinning triumphantly.

ZOEY

Aaaaaand... [clicks trackpad] Print! *Finally*, I'm done with my R1!

ZOEY closes her laptop and puts it aside, standing up. She pulls her phone out and walks over to the printer, about to scan her ID on its surface.

TESS [offstage]

NONONONO WAIT!!!!

TESS, a tired, neglected sophomore sporting a CBE shirt and carrying a nondescript coffee cup, runs onstage and smacks ZOEY's phone out of her hand.

ZOEY

What the--???

TESS [bent double, panting]

Queue's backed up to hell. Don't print here.

ZOEY

But I've been here all day, doing my Writing Sem paper. I haven't seen a single page come out of that printer.

Almost as if on queue, a paper pushes out of the PRINTER slit, agonizingly slowly, accompanied by Printer Noises. The process should take at least 10 seconds. ZOEY and TESS watch it print. Once the paper is all the way out, it flutters gracefully onto the pile of printed material already in front of the printer.

ZOEY [dumbfounded]

Wh... how is this even possible? Doesn't Princeton have billions of dollars in endowments? My RCA told me Bezos donated 1% of his annual earnings just last week!

TESS [shaking her head]

Princeton printers, they've been doing this for years now. Every library, every academic building, every random cluster. Chances of administration shelling out the cash for new printers

is slim to none. You've seen all the new sculpture construction sites across campus. You really think they're gonna spend money on something useful?

ZOEY

Where am I supposed to print my R1, then? Class is in half an hour.

TESS

Just e-mail it to your professor and pray, kid.

ZOEY considers her options. She looks between TESS and the PRINTER. Then she quickly scans her ID before TESS can stop her. The PRINTER makes a beeping noise.

TESS

NO!!!!

ZOEY

I can't risk it! The professor's really strict about hard copies!

TESS

Don't you get what you've done? You've cursed yourself! You're now honor-bound to stay on campus until your printout is done! I was trying to save you from making the mistakes I made!

As TESS talks, ZOEY crouches down and picks up the latest printed page.

ZOEY

What are you printing, anyway? You look too tired to be an... [squints at page] Econ major.

TESS

That's not my printout. I'm CBE, been here since yesterday. Finished my lab report for Thermo at 3am, scanned here in a sleep-deprived stupor. It wasn't until I got coffee from downstairs that I realized my mistake. I did my other psets to pass the time.

ZOEY

Jesus.

The PRINTER pushes out yet another page. Cue Printing Noises.

TESS [vaguely pleased]

Two pages in an hour. New record.

RYAN, a senior wearing a cap and gown, speedwalks onstage. He looks worried and frantic.

RYAN

Excuse me, what's printing at the moment?

TESS

Econ. Why?

RYAN tosses his cap on the ground in frustration.

RYAN

Dammit!

ZOEY

What's wrong?

RYAN

I'm printing my thesis at this cluster! 1,275 pages of pure Woody Woo genius, and I haven't seen a single one come out of this darned thing!

RYAN kicks the PRINTER. It makes a sad beeping sound.

ZOEY

Aren't you graduating, though? How are you gonna get your degree without a thesis?

RYAN

I'M NOT!!!!

Another page prints. Printing Noises. They watch it.

TESS

Wait, weren't you in my Comp Lit class last semester?

RYAN

I never finished that one either. Couldn't print out the readings. Had to drop it.

TESS

Can't you just read those on your computer?

RYAN

... Oh. Yeah, I guess.

MAYA [off-stage]

COMING THROUGH!

MAYA, a graduate student wearing a wedding gown, barrels into the scene.

MAYA

Quick! What's printing right now?

ZOEY, TESS, & RYAN

Econ.

MAYA [exasperated]

You're kidding me.

ZOEY

Why are you wearing a wedding dress???

TESS

I know students get common-law married all the time for financial aid, but isn't throwing a *real* wedding a little much?

MAYA

No no, I'm 32. I'm getting married for real. Like actually. Up in the chapel. *C'est l'amour*.

ZOEY

If you're in your thirties, didn't you graduate already? Why are you printing something out here?

MAYA

I'm a PhD student! I finished my thesis three years ago, but I haven't been able to defend it because it won't PRINT OUT! Worse, I promised my mom I wouldn't get married until I got my PhD, and *sacre bleu*, I just found out she got it in writing...

RYAN

You can't leave campus until your thing prints out, though.

MAYA

Well, duh! Why do you think there are so many weddings on campus? Those aren't regular, carefree Princeton residents! They're students, shackled to the institution because they wasted too much of their page quota to abandon their projects and print somewhere off-campus for a goddamn change!

ZOEY

Wait, what's your major?

MAYA (pretentious)

Comparative Literature.

ZOEY

So this stuff isn't yours. And you printed out your thesis *three years ago*? How long is this queue?

The very last page slips out of the PRINTER. Happy Printer Noises. Almost instantaneously:

AMOS [off-stage, hoarse]
Jiminy Cricket, it's finally done!

AMOS, a senior citizen, ambles onstage with a cane/walker.

AMOS
My Economics textbook has *finally* finished printing...!

AMOS bends down to pick up the hefty stack of printed paper.

AMOS
Goodness gracious, you kids have it easy! Back in my day, we had just the one printing press, and you had to wait ten years just to get a hard copy of your junior paper! Have a wonderful afternoon...!

AMOS ambles back offstage. PRINTER spits out another page. ZOEY picks it up. Everyone watches her, expectant.

ZOEY
It's... [squints] a Philosophy syllabus.

EVERYONE groans in disappointment.

END

SUPPORT GROUP

by Brooks Eikner and Monique Legaspi

Lights up on a dingy basement. BRODEE, BROCK, and BRODEN sit in a circle of cheap folding chairs, chatting about the weather (ad lib--hurricanes?). BRAD, the group's leader, enters.

BRAD

I now call to order the 78th meeting of the Tampa chapter of our support group. Are my dudes all present?

BRODEE, BROCK, & BRODEN [scattered]

Yo.

BRAD

Dudes accounted for. As you know, my name is Brad, and I'm twenty years clean. Brodee?

BRODEE

Yup. *[stands up]* Hey, dudes, my name is Brodee, and, uh... *[exhales]* I'm a Florida man.

ALL

Sup, Brodee.

BRODEE

It's been four years since my last headline. I tried to rob a store wearing, um... *[cringes]* a paper grocery bag... I forgot to cut the eyeholes out.

EVERYONE nods and puts up peace signs in solidarity.

BRAD

Thank you for sharing your truth, Brodee.

BRODEE nods and sits down. BROCK stands up.

BROCK

Hey, dudes. My name is Brock, and I'm a Florida man.

ALL

Sup, Brock.

BROCK

It's been two years since my last headline. I... uh... was feeling a little lonely, since my buds got picked up for trespassing... and...

BROCK wrings his hands, sighing deeply. He looks nervous, possibly ashamed.

BRAD

Be strong, Brock. Tell us your truth.

BROCK [tearing up]

I... I broke *into* jail. To hang with my buddies again.

BRAD

Thank you for sharing your truth, Brock.

BRODEE reaches over and pats BROCK on the back. Everyone turns to BRODEN.

BRAD

...Broden, would you like to introduce yourself?

BRODEN

Nope.

BRAD

You've been coming to these meetings for several weeks now, and I've noticed you haven't said much of anything. I want you to know that this is a safe space, Broden. I want you to feel *safe*.

BRODEE

Yeah, dog.

BROCK [puts hands over heart]

So safe.

BRAD

See? And your friends here care about you, man.

BRODEN [scoffs]

You're not my friends.

BRAD [slightly confused]

Well, of course we are...

BRODEE

We're all bros here.

BROCK

Total homies.

BRODEN

You don't get it, do you? Do you know why I come to these stupid meetings? *Court orders.*

BRAD

There's no need to lash out, Broden. I understand if you're ashamed.

BRODEN

I'm not ashamed! I'm proud. Proud to be a Florida man!

BROCK

Really?

BRODEN

Of course! Do you know what it's like to go your whole life being ignored by society? I got fired from DoorDash, went completely broke--that's when I tried to burn my house down for the insurance money. I painstakingly covered my entire house in Taco Bell Diablo Sauce.

BRODEE

...Why?

BROCK [voiced whisper]

Bro, it's *Diablo Sauce*. It's like you're literally eating hellfire.

BRODEN

[*gestures to BROCK*] Thank you. Suffice to say, my house didn't burn down. But it didn't matter; local news caught me, and soon my face was everywhere. [*sweeps arms out above head*] "Florida Man Tries to Burn Down House with Taco Bell Diablo Sauce." Bros, I was *hooked*. Pretty soon, I was committing petty crimes in unorthodox fashion all over the state. Judge wanted to teach me some humility by sending me here. But I don't regret a damn thing.

BRAD

Really? You're not even a *little* ashamed?

BRODEN

Hell no! Everything I did was dope! Dope enough to be on the news! Why would I give that up?

BRODEE [having an epiphany]
Yeah, why *would* he? Why would I...?

BRAD [sternly]
Brodee, don't listen to him. Remember your training. *[to BRODEN, more gently]* Listen, bro, I know how tempting it can be to keep living the Florida Man life. I've been there. But it's so much better to live quietly. Out of prison. In a home that isn't slathered in hot sauce from a Mexican-adjacent restaurant chain.

BRODEN, heated, moves to stand. His eyes are wide with the rush of adrenaline.

BRODEN
You know what? You're all weak. You don't *deserve* the Florida Man title. But I do. And I'm gonna prove it. How's this for a headline? "Florida Man Burns Down Burger King with Florida Man Support Group Still Inside"!

BROCK [incredulous]
With what? Diablo Sauce?

BRODEN
Even better. Something I know for *certain* will burn this place to the ground!

BRODEN pulls out a Molotov cocktail. Rather, a bottle with a dry, unlit handkerchief stuffed in the mouth. He starts to throw it down, but everyone jumps into action, trying to restrain him.

BRAD, BROCK, & BRODEE [scattered]
BRO, NO!!!!

They struggle for a good few seconds before BRAD manages to take the bottle from him, and BROCK and BRODEE wrestle him into his chair. BRODEN continues thrashing, trying to resist.

BRODEN [impassioned at first, but slowly devolves into hopelessness]
No! You don't understand! I need this! I need to burn down this Burger King! Or karate chop a swan! Or throw a footlong at a Subway employee because it had onions in it, even though I'd already eaten half of it! Because I'm a Florida Man! Because I... I'll always be a Florida Man! Because... because... if I'm not a Florida Man... what am I then? If I'm not a Florida Man... am I anyone worthy of praise? Of ridicule? Of attention?

BROCK and BRODEE slowly let go of BRODEN, who sinks into his chair.

BRODEN

I mean... am I anyone at all?

BRAD

Oh, Broden...

BRAD takes a knee in front of BRODEN. It seems for a second that they might hug, but then he holds out a hand instead. The two proceed to do an incredibly elaborate handshake, à la Jason and Pillboi in The Good Place. BRODEE goes offstage with the Molotov cocktail.

BRAD

You remembered.

BRODEN

From the first meeting, yeah. I just... I don't know, man. I'm sorta going through an identity crisis. Sorry I tried to immolate you guys. That was so not lit.

BRAD

It's okay, bro. I mean... *[holds up bottle]* it wasn't lit. Literally.

BROCK

Yeah, like, you know you're supposed to light the hanky, right?

BRAD

[shushes Brock gently] How about we make this meeting a little longer, bros? Just get totally in our feels. Broden, you should start us back up.

BRODEE returns with a giant plush alligator, handing it to BRODEN.

BRAD

You get to hold the Talking Gator.

BRODEN looks around. There is so much Florida Man love. He hugs the Talking Gator tight.

BRODEN [sniffles]

...Thanks, bros.

END

EPILOGUE

Ian and (Brooks? Tyler? Monique? Who wrote this?)

PROFESSOR

Well, friends, it is, I am sure, with great sorrow that we find ourselves nearing the end of our evening's journey. For you see, we had but two hours to sip from the sippi-cup of enlightenment, and it has been... (*Stares at watch theatrically. Eyes bug, brow furrows.*) Wouldn't ya know it. Relativity.

I hope to see you again next week. Same time. Different place. You can never be too careful.

But before we go, we have just a few logistical things to take care of. Let's see. (*Consults paper.*) Homework will not be posted on Blackboard, for obvious reasons. We will go through the syllabus in the order I reviewed it today for the first three weeks, after which I'll do whatever I want then act like you're the crazy one. The grader for this class is a, um, former grad student named Stockwell Hieronymus, very nice guy. If you have any complaints about his grading policy, say his name three times in a mirror. There is no precept, again for obvious reasons, but if you have any questions, my office hours are happy hour, golden hour, and the witching hour. They will be held in my office. Finally, if you are planning on trying to drop this class, I'm sorry. They already know who you are. Oh, and, one last quick thing. The real story with the "JFK" "assassination," as I mentioned earlier, is—

The entire cast bursts in, wearing sunglasses, men-in-black-ish-ly.

Is that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone to kill John F. Kennedy and that every word of the Warren Report is true and there's no conspiracy at all so it will not be discussed in this course, or ever. (*Smiles nervously.*) Class dismissed?

A MAN IN BLACK (into walkie-talkie)

Chhk. Class dismissed. Chhk.

END OF SHOW