

GUN STORY
A short play by
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GUN STORY

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MAE: The mother of teenagers, late 30s to 40s. Often serious, but witty. Not rich, but gets by. A devoted parent who has had a rough few years.

LLOYD: A middle-aged dad of two teen girls. Probably blue collar. Gregarious, a man's man. He probably laughs at jokes he knows he shouldn't and thinks feeling guilty about it later makes it okay.

THE SETTING:

Faculty lounge of your local high school.

Est. run time: 12-15 mins.

Note: A / indicates overlapping of dialogue.

These roles are not specific to any ethnicity, but diversity in casting is encouraged.

Production note: The dialogue at first should have a comedic, sitcom-like pace, with the a sharp shift when they realize their connection.

(Lights up on a faculty break room.)

(MAE enters, carrying a storage tote. She surveys the room then sets the tote on a table and goes back to get a second.)

(Mae smells something and goes to open a window. She removes items from the box, plates of cookies, some coffee mugs, t-shirts..)

(LLOYD enters, carrying some Walmart bags.)

LLOYD

(Jovially) Hi there. School board raffle?

MAE

Guilty.

LLOYD

Yeah, me too. I got some poster board and markers from Walmart. That's what Jane said/

MAE

/Jane said someone else was getting that stuff. Great. I have the prizes.

LLOYD

Awesome. Brr. It's cold in here. Can't we just get it all set up in the hallway?

MAE

No, the hall walkers are here till 8 o'clock.

LLOYD

Hall walkers?

MAE

Old folks who walk laps around the school.

LLOYD

What? That's a thing?

MAE

It is. Especially when it gets cold. It'll be like the sidewalks of Branson, Missouri out there.

LLOYD

I'll keep an eye out. Don't want to get slowly trampled to death.

MAE

Funny. Okay, let's get these tables set up first. I have the tablecloths in here.

(They move and set up two folding tables through the following.)

LLOYD

I'm Lloyd, by the way.

MAE

Mae.

LLOYD

You school board?

MAE

Nah. I got an athlete. I get guilted into helping out a couple times a year.

LLOYD

Guilted?

MAE

I'm ... happy to. It's just ... I volunteered for crap all the time when my kids were younger but I wasn't working then. I feel like I have more than put in my time, but when your kid is in sports ... oh, sorry. I'll quit complaining.

LLOYD

That's okay. This'll go fast.

MAE

Yeah.

LLOYD

My wife usually does this stuff, but she's out of town. I had the day off so what the heck? Man, it's freezing in here.

MAE

Sorry, I opened the window. The smell in here ...

LLOYD

Yeah, this teachers lounge might be non-smoking now, but you got 40 years of nicotine in these walls. Look at those yellow drips on the wall. See 'em?

MAE

Gross. Well, I'll close the window.

(She does.)

(They prepare the tables for a raffle sale through following.)

LLOYD

So you got an athlete too, huh? What year?

MAE

Junior. Golf and basketball. Yours?

LLOYD

Well, I got a senior who plays basketball and volleyball.

MAE

Volleyball. So you have a daughter.

LLOYD

Yeah. Two actually. My youngest isn't really into sports. She was kinda getting into golf for a while, but y'know ... teenagers go through phases.

MAE

Boy howdy. God. You think the newborn stage is the hardest/

LLOYD

/Or three. I don't know how we survived three. People talk about the terrible twos. Bullshit. A three year old will stab you with a pen just to see what happens.

MAE

Mine once screamed the whole 30 miles home from T-ville because I didn't let him have a THIRD time on the mechanical Pikachu thing at the mall.

LLOYD

Before I had kids, I'd see parents yelling at their kids in the store or something and I'd be

(cont'd) like, “Jesus Christ, give the little dude a break.” I’d think, man I’ll never yell at my kids in public like that.

(Mae laughs loudly.)

Yeah. Now when I see those parents, I’m like, “That poor son of a bitch ... or that poor lady.” Been there.”

MAE

Been there is right. Oh, man. I do not miss tantrums.

LLOYD

I *did not* miss the tantrums.

MAE

Oh, god. You have two teenage girls/

LLOYD

/Two. Teenage. Girls. Your trip home from T-ville? Every. Other. Day.

MAE

I just have moodiness. He’ll barely speak for days and he’s embarrassed to be seen with me. I’m like ... I walked with you through that weird-ass phase when you were four where you made up your own language. He’d be *(demonstrates)* click-click-ing his tongue and just making ... noise *(another demonstration)*.

LLOYD

Our youngest wouldn’t go on a regular toilet until she was almost five. We used to have to carry around a potty chair in the car, bring it in with us to the gas station if we stopped. This one time we were ... *(He stops. The memory is funny.)*

(Mae laughs with him.)

We were on a road trip, going up north, and ... Bree, she had to go, like right now! So we had to pull over on this dirt road. And there she is doing a number two on her Elmo potty in a ditch.

(They laugh. Mae’s laugh fades as she realizes something.)

MAE

Your daughter’s name is Bree?

LLOYD
Yeah. That's my sophomore.

MAE
Bree Allen?

LLOYD
Yeah! You know her?

MAE
I'm Steven's mom.

(A moment.)

LLOYD
Ah.

(It is tense.)

How's um, Steven doing?

MAE
He's doing.

LLOYD
Young love, huh? Bree was pretty heartbroke.

MAE
I'm ... I'm sure she was.

(Mae focuses on getting the raffle tables ready.)

LLOYD
I mean. I don't know what happened between 'em. Steven seems like a nice enough kid.

MAE
He is. Nice enough.

LLOYD
I mean, Bree had been all moody for a few days and ... then at dinner her sister asked about

(cont'd) homecoming and Steven and she started crying. Said he, what's the word, ghosted her.

MAE

Ghosted her?

LLOYD

Yeah, I didn't know either. It's when someone just drops out. They just stop all contact.

MAE

M-hm.

LLOYD

He unfriended her, stopped calling her, saw her in the hall one day and walked the other way. She doesn't know what she did.

MAE

Nothing.

LLOYD

What? I mean, she doesn't seem to know either. I mean, boys ... hey, I was one, but ... it seemed like he really liked her ...

MAE

He did. He ... does.

LLOYD

So then, why ...? Bree's still moping around/

MAE

/It's you.

LLOYD

What?

MAE

It's you. You scared him.

LLOYD

What? I always shook his hand when he came over.

MAE

Yes.

LLOYD

We'd joke around/

MAE

/Joke around.

LLOYD

/Yeah. Nothing out of line, or anything/

MAE

/Nothing out of line? You threatened to shoot him!

LLOYD

What? No, oh ... *(Lloyd laughs)* I guess, yeah. I told him, 'bring my daughter home by 11 or you'll meet my hunting rifle right up close'/'

MAE

/meet my hunting rifle right up close.

LLOYD

Yeah! See? I was just goofing around. I mean ... sure, as a dad with a daughter, I always mean it *a little*, but I knew Steven was a good kid.

MAE

You said it every time. The last time he came by, you were cleaning it in the garage and you did this.

(Mae does the I'm-watching-you move.)

LLOYD

(Laughing) Come on. That can't be why he/

MAE

/Yes, it can! How would you like it if Bree came to pick up Steven and I said, "Honey, you keep your hands off my boy or I'll shoot you in the face"?

LLOYD

Now, whoa there! I did not say anything like that/

MAE

Whoa there? You might as well have! You scared him! He doesn't know ...

LLOYD

What?

MAE

Steven is ... he's on the spectrum. You know what I mean by the spectrum?

LLOYD

Like what, he's autistic or something?

MAE

Yes. You'd never know. Unless you're me, or you're very close to him. But he doesn't always know when someone is joking. Like, if they *seem serious*, he can't always tell. It's ... hard sometimes. It's the one area socially, where ... it's hard.

LLOYD

Shit. I'm sorry.

MAE

When he actually saw you with the gun /

LLOYD

/He freaked out. He ... yeah. He took it to heart, huh?

MAE

Yeah.

LLOYD

You know ...

MAE

What do I know?

LLOYD

I feel like an asshole.

MAE

Well ... good.

LLOYD

I mean, I didn't know. Hell, my high school girlfriend's dad used to show off his switchblade every time/

MAE

/Why the hell is that funny in the first place? Especially today! I mean, do you watch the news?

LLOYD

Well, yeah, but I'm not one of those nuts who's gonna go on a rampage or something.

MAE

But how would he know that? Hell, how would anyone know that? I mean, you can't know anymore.

LLOYD

It scared him that bad? He told you?

MAE

Yes! He may be moody and embarrassed that I exist, but ... he tells me things. He said the first time he thought maybe it was a joke, I mean, we've talked about this, we've worked on ... social cues and ... when he saw the gun, he ... he said all he could see was you with your gun, and he couldn't get it out of his head.

LLOYD

He told you all this.

MAE

Yeah.

LLOYD

So then ... I mean, *didn't you* figure I was joking? You been around, right?

MAE

Again. Have you seen the news lately? Sure, *maybe* you were *joking*. *Maybe* you were okay. But what if you weren't? I mean you also definitely have a gun that you at least implied, joking or not, that you would use on my son. I'll take a broken hearted kid over ...

(cont'd) What would you do? If you were me?

(Lloyd sits there.)

(Mae puts a finishing touch on one of the tables.)

I think we're done. I hope these tables fit out the door now. There'd better be a door stop.

LLOYD

Mae.

MAE

Yes?

LLOYD

I know you're probably expecting some right to bear arms bullshit, but I'm not gonna do that. I'm truly sorry. I ... it's just a dumb guy thing. Dads protect their daughters. Hell, my oldest could protect me. She's a freaking Amazon who's played sports her whole life. I'm just a fair shot deer hunter who thought he was being funny.

But it wasn't funny to Steven and I apologize.

(Mae contemplates.)

MAE

Thank you.

LLOYD

Could you pass that on to him?

(Mae thinks.)

MAE

Fine. *(Beat)* If it gets him to stop blasting Sam Smith songs on repeat, then ... fine.

LLOYD

Let's see where these tables have to go.

(Lloyd steps outside the door and returns, chuckling.)

LLOYD

You weren't kidding.

MAE

What?

LLOYD

It's like the five o'clock buffet line out there.

MAE

Anyone wearing a sun visor? Indoors? That's my favorite.

(Puts jacket on) Lloyd. You mind helping me carry these boxes to my car so I can do it one trip?

LLOYD

Maybe.

MAE

(Mock tough guy) Don't make me pull my switchblade, man.

LLOYD

(Picking up a box) Hey, now don't be that guy.

MAE

Right. That guy was an ass.

(Peace.)

(Lights out.)