

# Hissy Fits

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## **Here Comes Baby Boo-Boo**

*LEIGHA'S space is a flexible one. She guides us from place to place transforming the space as she goes. Lights dimly lit on a southern community center in East Tennessee. We see a light blue colored banner hanging in the background that says Here Comes Baby Boo-Boo. A chair waits down stage. In walks a very pregnant Leigha. She wears a white and blue plaid dress with a prominent ponytail. It is the 90s after all. As soon as she gets down-stage the stage lights brighten and we hear "surprise." She is jolted. She calls out certain members of the audience.*

### **LEIGHA**

Whew lord, y'all about made me pee on myself. Anette, did you put this together? Well you all got me good. ( A little winded) I'm just gonna take a seat down for a second.

*She sits on a fold out chair*

Let's see who we got here. Sheila! Honey is that you? You drove all the way from Townson for this? Bless your heart. How's that man of yours? Any of you girls met Sheila's new man? You girls should hear this man sing. It's like the voice of god hollering at yah. Tina! I thought you said you were going out of town this week? Tina and I work together at the Kroger. You didn't even go out of town. Well, you sure fooled me. Tina and I met when we both worked the perfume counter a few years ago. She has the longest nails I've ever seen in my life. Everyone, take a look at Tina's nails. Those aren't fake either. Those suckers are home grown. How long it take you to grow them things? Michelle! You are the last person I expected to be here. Y'all Chelle here is my cousin. Forgive me honey but I HAVE to tell this story. When Chelle and I were kids we used to play together in the summertime. Well, my aunt Kay used to scream at us for coming in and out too much. Said we were letting out the air conditioning. So this one time Chelle had to use the bathroom real bad, but aunt Kay wouldn't let her come in. Instead she gave her a Mellow Yellow bottle and said "pee in that." Later that night we are sitting down for dinner when Chelle's young brother Will comes in drinking some soda. I said "Hey Will. Get me one of them sodas" "We ain't got no more soda. I found this one outside and I'm keeping it for myself." I'm serious, the boy was drinking a bottle of Chelle's pee. That story tickles me every time.

God, it's good to see you all. Doctor says I shouldn't be out of bed. Apparently I have some kind of condition and have to stay in bed for the next few weeks. The baby is

wanting to hop on out of me, but he ain't finished cooking yet if you know what I mean. I even have to take this pill three times a day to keep him from falling out of me. Y'all ever heard of something so crazy?

*She sees the gifts. She picks up the bag, but it is really heavy*

**LEIGHA CONT**

What do we have here? Lord, what in the hell is in here?

*She looks in the bag and starts laughing. She pulls out half of a wrapped watermelon, and a bottle of Mountain Dew*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Anette you dog, I know you did this. I have discovered something that will rock your world. Being pregnant makes you crave the strangest things, but my cravings are genius. Now, having a baby in this Tennessee summer heat is awful. I'm hot all the time. My feet are constantly swollen, and I'm really cranky. One night I was looking for anything that would cool me off when I suddenly got an idea. How refreshing would it be if I soaked a piece of watermelon in some Mountain Dew. Sounds wild I know, but boy did it hit the spot. The second that fizzy melon hit my lips I felt a cool sensation come over my entire body. You haven't lived until you've tasted Mountain Dew soaked watermelon.

*She sets the gift down, looks at her stomach, and takes in her thoughts*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Just a few weeks away from Baby Boo-Boo's arrival. Can I admit something to you girls? I'm a little scared. I'm thrilled to be a mom. I can't wait 'til this little guy gets here, but this is not the way I thought it would happen yah know? Having kids. I thought I'd meet the guy, get the house, then have the kids. I'm not saying single moms can't do the job, but I'm a little scared. What if I'm no good at this parenting thing? I want to be able to give him everything he needs to survive in this world and make something of himself. But what if I miss something? I'm glad I've got y'all. Between mama, Anette, and the rest of y'all this kid is gonna have a village of women looking out for him. Alright Anette where's my cake? If you've gotten me chocolate with that cool-whip shit on it I'm gonna be pissed.

*Transition. Leigha picks up the bag, and transforms the space into a kitchen with cheap southern wallpaper.*

## **Radio Monologue**

*LEIGHA re-enters wearing a University of Tennessee football jersey. She's fiddling with an old radio. She sits the radio on the chair and attempts to find an outlet. She finds an outlet, gets on her hands and knees, and attempts to plug in the old radio.*

### **LEIGHA**

Well shit. Good lord your momma's gettin' old. Hell's bells, no wonder no one listens to these things anymore this is a pain in the ass.

*She finally gets the radio plugged in. She does a happy dance. She turns the knobs of the radio, looking for the right station*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Now, get in here and sit down. We aren't moving until her new song comes on. I've been doing my best, but I can't find it. I've spent the last few days driving around all of east Tennessee with my recorder in hand but not one station has played it. Good lord all I'm hearing is static. If we miss it cuz of this old thing I'm gonna be pissed. The fact that your little friend James heard it before you really upsets me. I know y'all are close but he can be a real shit sometimes. Everyone knows that you're her biggest fan. You own every album. You know the lyrics to every song. You clearly adore her. So why does he feel he has to challenge you and claim he's the bigger fan. That's a liar son, and you don't need a lair as a friend. It gets under my skin that this 12 year old is claiming to have seen the video before you like he's won some lottery. You know I love you but I just can't afford that MTV station. I'm working a full time job as it is, and I can't possibly manage MTV, and your dance lessons. The video will come on again. Hell, it's the theme for the latest James Bond film, maybe they'll play it at the end of the credits or something. You know what doesn't make any sense to me? How does his mother afford MTV? One parent and two kids on a hairdresser's salary. The math doesn't add up. Poor thing goes through boyfriends like cheap panties. I'm not saying that they are paying for her to have fancy channels, but it makes you think. Have you seen how thin she's gotten? Hell, leggings aren't supposed to be loose. Woman's got absolutely no ass. What the hell are these men supposed to hang on to?

*She finds the right station*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Praise Jesus! It's alive! Ok, you know how determined I can get when I'm mad. I'd been driving around all day flipping from station to station praying this song would come on. Nothing. Every radio station has the same ten songs on a constant rotation. If I have to hear that Avril chick one more time I'm gonna lose my mind. I'd had it! So I called up Star 102.1 and gave them a piece of my mind. I told them my son is the biggest Madonna fan in East Tennessee and they need to play her new song so he could hear it. Get this. He didn't know Madonna even had a new single. I told him it's the theme song for the new James Bond film. What kind of disc jockey is he if he doesn't know there's a new theme song to the latest bond film? That boy ain't right. He assured me that he was gonna play it within the next hour.

*The song fades on radio followed by an interlude from the DJ. the following is a pre-recorded conversation coming through the radio*

**DJ**

Star 102.1 East Tennessee's premiere radio station playing the hits of the 80s, 90s, and now. We had a sassy one on the line here earlier that brought many of us here some joy. Take a listen. Your son's a Madonna fan?

**LEIGHA ON RADIO**

Oh honey, the biggest fan you've ever seen.

**LEIGHA**

Oh son listen, your Momma's on the radio.

**LEIGHA ON RADIO**

This boy puts on concerts in his room to her music.

**LEIGHA**

Oh lord is that how I sound?

**LEIGHA ON RADIO**

He even wears dresses and lip syncs entire albums in the bathroom mirror. I've told him time after time he's gotta build in an intermission cause the rest of the house needs to use the john. Yah know what I mean? He's always been creative like that.

**LEIGHA**

Now be honest with me. I don't really sound like that do I?

**LEIGHA ON RADIO**

He loves her. I think she's a bit of a fruit cake at times. Running around with her underwear on the outside.

**LEIGHA**

Which I did first. I don't care what anyone else says, I was wearing bustiers on the outside before Madonna ever did.

**DJ**

Leigha, Star 102.1 thanks you for your highly entertaining call. This next song goes out to Leigha's son. We hope you Cherish it.

*The first few notes of Madonna's Cherish begins to play. Frustrated, LEIGHA aggressively unplugs the radio from the wall.*

*Transition. LEIGHA grabs the radio and exits. The space is transformed into a home office. LEIGHA returns wearing a business jacket and colorful top. She is on the phone with her son's middle school*

**CUT**

**LEIGHA** *on phone*

I understand he's busy, but I need to speak to the principal first thing in the morning. I would like to explain the situation myself. Ok then, I'll see you tomorrow.

*She hangs up the phone*

**LEIGHA** to audience

I've had it with the school system. Every school in east Tennessee should be wiped out. I'm tired of these principals promising me they have a "no bullying policy" when they can't deliver. No sooner do I believe them I'm having to report to their office because some inbred tried to attack my son. It all started with Alcoa elementary school. I know he started school later than the other kids, but he could never seem to get caught up. That's when Ms. Phelps walked into the picture. This woman was something else. She didn't see eye to eye with my son from the start. See, my son doesn't have a filter. If something pops into his mind by god he'll say it. Apparently he made one too many observations for her liking. She used to wear the same pair of sea shell earrings everyday. I mean the same pair EVERY. SINGLE. DAY! One day my son called her out and said "Lord woman, don't you have any other earrings?"

*She laughs begins to laugh*

**LEIGHA CONT**

I know I shouldn't laugh. It WAS really disrespectful but can you imagine a little five year old saying something that sassy. Anyways, Ms. Phelps lost my respect early on. When we enrolled him in her class I made a point to tell her he can't read. Then, at the end of the year she pulls me into her office and tells me my son doesn't have the reading skills to move on to the second grade. I told them from the beginning what his problem was and no one listened to me. The way his disability was explained to me is: if a window is open, a bird is chirping, and a teacher is talking, my son can only focus on one of them. That's why Alcoa was such a nightmare. They didn't have traditional classrooms. They packed kindergarten through fifth in one room and called it a "pod." What a mess. How's someone with a disability supposed to learn when they're fighting through all that noise?.

Now, I thought Alcoa was bad, but Carpender's Middle School is a disgrace. They have this motto about "striving for excellence." That's their word there, excellence. If they used the time it took to come up with that motto to discipline their bullies, they'd have a halfway decent school on their hands. Let me tell you what just happened to my son at Carpender's Middle School. I had a bunch of meetings lined up one day so I had arranged for the kids to go to their after school program. When I arrived, my son was in tears. While the teacher went to the bathroom a group of kids held him down, and punched him in the stomach. Then, one of them got a pair of scissors, ran it along his skin, and threatened to cut his dick off. All because he didn't want to watch some show. These are 7th and 8th graders. Where in the hell did they learn to be this violent? I'm gonna march myself in the principal's office and give him a piece of my mind. Why is my 6th grade son being left alone in a room with 7th and 8th graders? Why do these kids have access to harmful objects? His secretary just gave me some line about how they don't put up with bullies and that these kids will be reprimanded. Yah right. All these schools care about are test scores. My son is the artistic kid with the learning disability so all of his troubles get pushed aside.

*Transition: Lights shift as LEIGHA moves her chair to an angle. She is now driving. The passenger seat of the car is angled to the audience so that dialogue is directed at them. She removes her jacket, as stars encompass her. Tension is high. She parks the car, and tries to form words.*



## **They All Look The Same, Just Different Colors**

### **LEIGHA**

It's getting late. I think I'll swing by the KFC when we're done and just get a bucket for dinner. Don't really feel like cooking. Maybe we'll get some of those potato wedges your dad likes. If they even have any. Last few times I stopped in, they were out. (a beat) You have your own computer. Your daddy built it for you from scratch. It might not have the fastest internet, but it's a good computer. Most of your friends don't have their own computer. Some of their families might not have a computer at all, but not you. There are three different computers in our house, so why would you use your daddy's computer to look at that? Interesting thing about those computers, you can check the browsing history. Bet you didn't think we'd catch you did yah? We can see every site you've ever looked at. Now I don't have the right to question the boy you were watching with. That's HIS mama's job. I didn't even tell her what you all were looking at cause I don't know what her beliefs are or how she would react. I've got some news for you. They all look the same, just different colors. Different shapes, different sizes, but they are all the same.

*Beat*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Are you thinking you might be....? Let me tell you something. Back when I used to work at Kroger there was this guy named Earl. Worked in the floral department. Sweetest guy I'd ever met. Always had some entertaining story to tell. Now it was pretty obvious when I first saw Earl that something was...different about him. Yah know. He didn't walk or talk in the same way all the other guys did. Moved to the beat of his own drum. The more I got to know Earl the more he started to open up to me. Soon I found that Earl...enjoyed the company of men. If you know what I mean. Now it didn't matter to me one way or another how he lived his life. Earl tickled me to death. I thought he was hilarious, but others felt differently. You see there was the other name people used to call him. Wanna know what that name was? Earl the Pearl. That's what they used to call him behind his back, because he was so comfortable with being...yah know. The reason I tell you this is to get you thinking. Before you start making any declarations on who you are just know people are gonna talk. Ain't nothing I can do to stop them. You are choosing a hard life. Best thing for you to do is to keep this to yourself. Ain't nobody needs to know. I mean,

have you explored all other options? Maybe you just like butch girls. Get you a woman with more muscle on her or something.

I know I promised not to tell your father we talked, but that's a promise I can't keep. I know you two don't have the best relationship, but that's my husband and I have the right to share this with him if I desire. Let's be honest, this isn't the first time we've seen this pop up on your browser history. I know you wanna claim that your daddy is mean to you, and that he doesn't love you, but I don't believe that. I'll tell you the truth. After we found you looking at this the first time I told him I was afraid you'd turned out to be...yah know. Guess what he said? He didn't believe it. He refused to think that about you. Now don't tell me that ain't love. What baffles me the most about this is you could have any woman you want. I see you hanging around the most beautiful girls all the time. Are you telling me you aren't interested in any of them? Hell, you took a set of twins to the prom. There aren't any feelings there at all? Olivia and Leslie adore you. Either one of them would be happy to date you. I'm gonna love you either way, but you've chosen a hard life.

*Transition. Lights shift as LEIGHA transforms the space into a rooster themed kitchen. She can be heard going through a refrigerator off stage.*

## **Hate Shack, Baby Hate Shack**

**LEIGHA** *Calling from off stage*

Mama you got any more of that macaroni salad? You can't possibly be out you told me on the phone you made some this morning. I bet Frank's kids ate it all. Well I bet they did. Selfish little brats are always taking everything. I bet if Frank got an actual job and a house of his own there'd be plenty of macaroni salad for the rest of us.

*She enters. Realizing her outburst*

**LEIGHA**

I'm sorry I shouldn't be yelling at you mama. It's been a bad couple of weeks.

*LEIGHA looks back towards the cabinets off stage*

**LEIGHA CONT**

What is it? What are you pointing at? ....There's nothing here....What is it you keep pointing at? Higher? Lord, well let's see if I can even haul myself up here

*She moves the chair and carefully mounts. Now that she is higher she can see a bag of potato chips and some unopened pint of cake frosting off stage. She grabs the goodies from off stage*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Ah, yes Mama knows best! Now I got my sweet and my salty.

*She rips into the frosting. Dips a potato chip into the thick frosting and feasts. A feeling of relief comes over. She ponders her next words.*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Welp, Garry left. Mmm-hmm. Up and left. This wasn't a part of the plan. We were supposed to wait until the kids finished out the school year, then tell them about our separation. I guess he just couldn't stand another minute around me. Him wanting to leave sooner doesn't bother me. It's the way he went about it that gets under my skin. It was the night of my son's dance recital. This was his year. He just lost all that weight. This year's routine was to Love Shack. That campy B52s song. Best routine he's ever done. This was supposed to be his night, and Garry shit all over it. I should have known

something was up when he insisted on taking separate cars. Said he wanted to get a later start so he didn't have to sit through all the other kid's routines. So after his recital, he rode with me, and my daughter rode with Garry. We make it home and Garry pulls up beside me. Laurel jumps out of the car with a face full of tears screaming "don't leave, don't leave." What was he thinking? Why did he think this was the proper way to break the news to her? I don't mean to compare my kids, but out of the two of them why did he choose to corner her? My daughter doesn't handle pressure or change well. Anytime she is faced with a difficult life task she goes to pieces. That's just how she is. I think one of two things has happened here. Either he is completely unaware of who his children are [which is believable] or he did this on purpose. Did he want her to make a big scene so that he could slip out easier? When I confronted him all he said was "change of plans." Get a later start alright. So that he could pack his bags without us knowing.

I've seen her. Did I tell you that? He claims he's leaving because we don't have anything in common, but I know he's seeing another woman, and I know who she is. He works with her. I knew something was going on between them the first time I laid eyes on her. You've seen her too. Remember that party I threw a couple of months ago? The one where Anette was trying to sell us those goopy face masks? She was there. I'm close with a lot of people he works with so I invited Nelly, Bobbie, and all them. Even though something didn't feel right about having her in my house I swallowed it and carried on. You remember her? My height. With a sort of brown-red hair. Skinny. Ringing a bell? You know why you don't remember her mama? Because she wasn't there to learn about face masks. She was there to flirt with my husband. She spent the whole party sitting in the garage with Garry. Mama, what kind of woman comes to another woman's home and spends the entire evening alone with her husband? I confronted him about it. If he thinks he's gonna slip out on me, I'm going to call him out. "Why are you with this woman?" he just looked at me dumbfounded. "That's right. I know about her and don't pretend you're not." Told me I was making things up in my mind

Mama, I've done something I'm not proud of. I had to know. I needed to see with my own eyes. A few nights ago I tried to call Garry, but he wasn't picking up. I tried to let it go but it ate away at me. So, I told the kids I wanted to go for a drive. But this was going to be a special drive because we get to wear costumes. Had them help me do my makeup and pick out a wig. We drove past Garry's apartment, but he wasn't there. So I followed my hunch, made a few turns, and there he was. Coming out of her house in the middle of the night. He had almost convinced me he was innocent. Almost made me doubt what I knew to be true. But now I've seen them together. I shouldn't have had the kids with me. I know that was a bad decision, but now I have proof.

*Transition. LEIGHA grabs her snacks, and exits. She returns with a beer and a slightly altered outfit. She chugs the beer as the space changes into a crappy dive bar. She addresses the audience. She is buzzed but by no means is she intoxicated*

**ConDAMNS****LEIGHA**

My son has been out of the closet for some time now. Recently he has started to embrace his...gay-ness I guess you'd call it. He's been vocal about the boys he fancies, and has even done drag a few times, which I find to be a hoot and a holler. Seriously, the gays are so entertaining. I was afraid for his safety for a while. Tennessee can be pretty ignorant sometimes, but he hasn't had too many problems. Which surprises me, because my son can be pretty ballsy. His little group of friends decided that they wanted to go to the premiere of Hairspray in Turkey Creek. If you haven't been to the Regal theatre there you are missing out. It is a treat. Reclining chairs, huge HD screen. You sure do get your money's worth. Another mother and I agreed to go along. I really enjoyed the Ricki Lake version, so I thought this one was bound to be good. Plus I needed to see Mr. John Travolta for myself. Can you think of a more bizarre choice for that role? I would never have thought he'd accept that role in my life. The same guy that played butch Danny Zuko is now playing a woman. We sure are living in a different time. Well anyways, that night I had some errands to run so I agreed to meet them all at the theatre. When I got there they had all shown up in drag. I mean full drag. Dresses, wigs, makeup, everything. They even fashioned themselves a pair of tits from some Party City balloons. So there I am in the middle of redneck Tennessee with a bunch of 17 year old drag queens. That's ballsy. I would never have had the guts to do that if I was a gay teen. We sure did have a blast though. Thank god I had a camera. My son looked pretty good, but his best friend Josh could have passed for the real thing. I'm serious. I can only imagine the looks those boys got when they tried to use the bathroom.

There are other times when he invites me into his culture and I feel lost at sea. There was this one time he was in a local fashion show. They were trying to raise money for gay rights, or homeless gay youth or something. It was a good cause, so I agreed to come and watch. Brought a couple of my gal pals along. We felt so glamorous going to a fashion show, but boy were we in for a surprise. We get there and it was a gay UNDERWEAR auction. Each model would come out and the crowd would bid on their pair of skivvies. Why in the hell would anyone want to buy a pair of underwear that some sweaty model had been wearing? I was prepared to watch my son model some polos or jean jackets, but nothing could have prepared me for this. I felt like he was in some kinda Las Vegas showgirl revue. After I adjusted to the shock I looked down and saw our table was covered in these pamphlets. They've got all these weird shaped gadgets for sale. Now you ain't gonna believe but those products are intended for your butt-hole. Can you believe that? How's anyone supposed to fit something that size in

their butt-hole? I honestly thought they were an assortment of tiny desk lamps. I had no clue where I was supposed to direct my eyes. The stage was filled with my half-naked son, and my table was covered in a bunch of butt lamps. Like I said I was just out to sea on that one.

But the one thing that shocked me most about my son's new found gay-ness is this. He was accepted to the Governor's School of the Arts. For those of you that don't know it's an advanced arts program that he had to audition to get into. He beat out hundreds of actors from all of Tennessee for a spot. This was huge for him. He was going to be able to work on acting all summer, AND he would be receiving college credit for it all. I couldn't be prouder. This was going to be his first time being away from home. Three months isn't that long, but it was going to be odd not having him around. The day it came to leave I checked over everything. I made sure he had his pillow, and that he packed enough clothes. This wasn't a quick trip to a friend's house. If he forgot something he was just out of luck. He'd be trapped at this campus for three months with no car, and only a little money. I did what any mother would do and went through every pocket of his bag and made sure everything was accounted for. That's when I found them. Like I said earlier he has been out for a while at this point, but it wasn't until I found those condoms that I ever thought he might be....active. Is he having sex? Should I be having a conversation about safe sex? He has condoms, so I guess we're past that. Oh lord he got ones that are ribbed. Does he even know what that means? Hell, I don't even know what that means in the context of two men. Maybe he got these because he hopes to "pop his cherry" at camp. Now that's not the right term. What's it called when it's a gay's first time? Butt blast? Don't tell him I said that, I'm sure that sentence is problematic in some way. This is raising so many uncomfortable questions. I can handle the drag. I can handle him dating, but I just don't know what to do with the thought of him being sexually active.

*Transition. LEIGHA disposes of her beer, and transforms the space into a hospital waiting room. She fidgets around trying to make use of her energy. She makes a choice, gets up, and makes her way down stage*

## **The Waiting is the Hardest Part**

### **LEIGHA**

Excuse me, ma'am? Hello, ma'am? Sweetheart, I'm trying to ask you a question. Can I get an update from my son's doctor? We're in this room right here. I've been waiting here forever and no one has told me anything.

*She doesn't care for the nurse's response*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Sweetheart, I'm gonna need an update now. The past 48 hours have been very difficult, but this waiting around is about to push me over the edge. Where is his doctor? The drive from Tennessee was no joy ride, and I want to speak to this man about my son's well being. I know you're young, but do you have any kids? If you did you'd know how hard it can be leaving them in a new place for the first time. I didn't want to drop him off in a new city alone. So, I asked my ex-husband to come along. I can see by your ring there you're married yourself. The only advice I can give you is keep an eye on him. He'll start off so great, but if you don't keep an eye out he'll slip out the back and on to the next woman.

It's funny how you can be married to someone for 14 years and never notice what a weirdo they are. Garry kept making these odd comments about my relationship. Oh, so I've recently started seeing this guy. We've been hitting it off great, but by no means do I hear wedding bells. So Garry starts making these weird comments. Like, calling the guy I'm seeing "a kid." Good lord, so the man is a few years younger than me. So what? I spent most of my 20's married to a man that was 14 years older than me and I never want to do that again. Does your husband take you out on dates? I know you must be busy being a nurse and all, but I'm sure he still takes you out. Garry never wanted to do anything while we were married. Nothing. That's the first sign right there. Sweetheart, you need to be writing this down. If he doesn't want to take you anywhere, something's up. This time around I went younger, and there's not a damn thing wrong with that. So why does Garry think he's got the right to chime in on my social life?

What's taking so long? All I want is an update. Is he gonna be able to walk in the next few weeks? I'm paying the man enough the least he can do is answer some of my questions. We make it here and as soon as we start winding down for bed Garry starts in on me again. These are the last moments I'll have with my son before he starts



college, and they're being wasted on this man-child. All men are child-like at some point or another. I'm sure you and your husband are deeply in love, but spend enough time with him and you'll see what I'm talking about. The next morning we load my son into his dorm, say our goodbyes, and hit the road. No one ever prepares you for how difficult it is to leave your child for the first time. Sure, he's done arts programs where he's been out of the house for a few weeks at a time, but this was permanent.

24 hours later I'm sitting in a Texas Road House when my son calls me. He's in the emergency room. This has got to be some cruel joke. What could have happened in that short amount of time? He must have been hit by a car. That's the only thing that makes sense to me. I don't know if you've ever been to Tennessee, but we never use sidewalks there. Maybe he got confused and stepped in front of a car. Does my son even understand the crosswalk signs? Don't think I'm calling him stupid, I just wonder if he's ever even seen them before. He then tells me that they are about to take him in for surgery. Surgery! None of this makes any sense. You know what really happened? His testicles exploded. Don't believe me, check his file. Got here this morning, and all I wanna know is what I'm supposed to do. As much as I want to I can't take him home. It means the world to him to go to this school. That's why I need to talk to his doctor ASAP. I've got to start developing a plan for him. He's starting school Monday come hell or high water. I'm not gonna let his porcelain nut sack put him out of commission. Now, are you gonna help me or do I need to make a scene?

*Transition. LEIGHA opens up the space. Grabs a jacket and a purse filled with Little Debbie cakes. She is outside Heather's house.*

## **Sober Hates and Debbie Cakes**

### **LEIGHA**

Heather, you come out from hiding and face me. I told you on the phone I want to talk to you in person and I'm not leaving your lawn until we do.

*LEIGHA waits for a moment, increasing in anger. She is threatened by Heather's silence. She will NOT be made to wait. She fishes through her purse and produces one of the Little Debbies. She bounces the cake in her hand like a baseball*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Honey, it is about 105 out here. I've got a purse full of half melted Little Debbies that I'm prepared to chuck at your front door if you don't come out here. I'm not a violent woman Heather, but you've poked mama bear and now you have to hear the growls. I'm gonna give you til the count of three to come out here. If not I will be forced to cover your freshly painted door in the Wal-Mart rejected snack treats I found in my car. Did you hear that Heather? Your "alabaster" colored door is about to be ruined by this Cosmic Brownie. And I won't stop there. I will coat your carnations in Cream Pie, soak your sculptures in Swiss Roll, and nuke your ....N-arigolds in Nutty Buddy. Don't believe me? 1....2....You're being a child about this! Just come out here and talk to me. No? Fine! 3!

*She throws a brownie into the audience.*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

If you're not gonna face me then I'll yell my thoughts loud enough for the entire neighborhood to hear. First of all, you are a grown ass woman, so why are you starting fights on Facebook? I know you don't agree with a lot of my son's political views, but he has the right to voice them. He's in his 20's, he's gay, and an artist. Of course he is gonna be vocal about what he thinks. What did you expect? I would have some sympathy for you if your argument stood on ground, but you are completely in the clouds with this one. Now use your imagination for a second. This world we live in is obsessed with reality television. More people listen to the word of Kim Kardashian than our lord Jesus Christ. I tell yah it's outrageous. Now imagine that one of those voices the world listens to is a mouthpiece for hate. Whether you want to admit it or not those Duck Dynasty guys are nothing but a mouthpiece for hate. Are you listening, Heather? You wanna flicker your lights are something so I at least know your listening? Heather! Fine!

*Digs in her purse for another treat*

**LEIGHA CONT**

You're doing this Heather, not me. It's your hand that's about to assault this lawn Gnome, not me. Last warning.

*She chucks another treat into the audience*

**LEIGHA CONT**

All his status said was he's not surprised they're a bunch of bigots. That's fair. They compared gay sex to bestiality. Which is absolutely moronic. Do you know what bestiality is? It's when you have sex with animals. I'm talking about more than just a little peanut butter. I'm talking about full on sex WITH AN ANIMAL. Now Heather, you can't sit there and defend these people, then walk in the Knoxville Pride parade. That's just not how it works. You can't support your half brother then turn around and support the people discriminating against him. I don't care how many rainbow bracelets you've made. In no way is my son's attraction to Mexican men like the desire to fuck goats. Did you think about that before you decided to take your frustrations out on him?

*She has gotten winded and decides to sit down on the lawn. She eats a cake from her purse for energy. Midway through the treat she gets an idea. She crumbles the cake into pieces, lays down in the grass, and starts to make a lawn angel. Covering the fresh clipped grass in muddy cake. She stands, grassy cake in hand, then throws it at the audience. She takes in her disappointment*

**LEIGHA CONT**

I think your lowest act in all this is your religious angle. His speaking out against homophobia is in no way "oppressing your Christian voice." You aren't being persecuted just because someone disagrees with you. I feel hoodwinked Heather. After my divorce from your daddy you were nothing but hospitable. You treated me like a friend and made me feel like family even though there is no blood between us. But knowing that you would use your Christian status as a cover up for your own idiotic behavior sickens me. There is no way you and I are praying to the same God. I think it best if you stay away from my kids. I don't ever want to have to have this conversation again. Because if I have to I'll be bringing something a little more permanent than Debbie Cakes.

*A moment. Then, headlights flashing to LEIGHA'S side. She turns and realizes Heather is just pulling up. She says the next bit of dialogue as she walks off stage to Heather's car*

**LEIGHA CONT** *Calling off stage*

Heather you liar. You told me you were at home. I've been sitting here yelling at your front door and you ain't even here. Damn, you've made me look so stupid.

*Transition. LEIGHA exits, and the space transforms into another southern kitchen. Leigha enters. She has just defused a bomb in the other room. Her boyfriend is a child. When he gets in "one of his moods" it takes an act of god to turn him around. She speaks directly to the audience. They are her son*

## **Lasagna Piece**

### **LEIGHA**

Whatever you do, don't go in there. I just calmed him down. He's on his second beer so in about 20 minutes his mood will be better. What are you doing?

*No response*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Don't give me that sarcastic look. I mean, what are you cooking?

*No response*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Did you ask Jason if he wanted lasagna? What if he doesn't want lasagna? You're in HIS house. If he doesn't like it you'll just have to make something else.

*No response*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

Don't think I didn't hear you talking to your sister. I've got ears all over this house. "I don't stick up for you?" What's that supposed to mean? You still feeling sore over y'all's tiff? He was upset. When that happens just go along with it. He isn't going to do anything. You're being dramatic.

*No response*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

It's his birthday party. If he wants to have it here that's his right. He wants an extra room for his friends to hang out in and he's right, the den is the biggest room in the house. I'm sorry you don't have your own room while you're staying here, but it's not gonna kill you to move that mattress for his party. I know it doesn't make much sense to have a BBQ out back and another party room all the way downstairs, but that's what he wants. Do you want me to move the party because he got in your face during an argument? That would be pretty foolish, so get that thought out of your head.

*A beat*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Your grandmother likes him. When daddy passed, Jason was the first person she reached for not me. She wanted Jason to hold her. Don't you think that means something? Ok, so the night of the funeral wasn't the best. Should he be getting shit faced the same day my daddy is laid to rest? No, but that is no reason to judge him. He feels threatened by you. He thinks you're going to come between us. Now, I know you're upset because we haven't seen each other much since you've been home, but he likes to spend a lot of time with me. Why can't you just be happy for me? I'm allowed to be happy. You're not gonna like everyone I date but, I'm allowed to be in a relationship without seeking your approval. You and your sister don't get it. She has your niece. You have a whole other life in Chicago. When your dad left I was completely alone. After fourteen years of marriage he just walked out on me for a younger model. You remember what it was like when you were a kid. He had nothing to do with us. He just sat in that garage playing on the computer. I know you all judge me because I wasn't "getting out there and making friends" after my divorce, but I didn't want to spend my nights with a bunch of chatty women. I want to spend them with a man. After years of living with someone who never wanted to leave the house I've found someone who is game for anything. I know he's not perfect. I'm aware of his possessive nature. You don't even know the half of it. But I will stay in this relationship until I've had enough, and no one's gonna change my mind. Not you. Not your sister. No one.

*No response*

*Transition. In a huff LEIGHA exits as the space turns into a coffee shop. She enters inconspicuously and sits. She's been waiting for a while. Finally she connects with the audience as if they just arrived.*

## **I Found His Brothers**

### **LEIGHA**

Oh thank god. I was starting to think you weren't going to come. (realizing) Did I wake you up? So sorry about that. I know it's early, but I NEED to tell you something. My son doesn't know you're here does he? Promise me that he doesn't know you're here. That's why I had us meet here instead of just telling you on the phone. I'm sorry I'm all flustered. I just discovered some news that is life changing, and I don't know how he is going to react. I know he has a show going on right now and I don't want this news to "artistically throw him off" or whatever. You're his boyfriend. I figured I'd get your reaction and when he finishes the show you can tell him.

*She takes in a focused breath, before dropping the bomb*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

You remember my son has never met his biological father right? I'm sure he's told you I raised him to believe that dumbass Garry was his real father but he ain't. His "real" father is a guy named Richard. I met him at some concert in my 20s and we hit it off. He played bass in a local band, and swore up and down he was gonna be famous. Of course that never happened. Anyways I turned up pregnant and he wanted nothing to do with it, so I haven't seen the son-of-a-bitch since 1990. Now, don't judge me for what I'm about to tell you. I know my son wants nothing to do with this man. There were many times I worried he was gonna get curious and go out looking for him. Thank God that never happened. But doesn't he want to know what the man looks like? If it were me I'd probably feel the same way about it he does, but I'd still want to know what the guy looked like. Again, don't judge me, but one night I was on Facebook playing that Farmville game. Y'all ever start playing that? I've sent you loads of requests. I was waiting for my strawberries to grow so I started scrolling through my feed when something caught my eye. It was Richard. His profile was in my "friends you may know" section. I stared at his profile picture for about fifteen minutes. I don't know why but I had to click on it. It was eating away at me. Maybe I secretly wanted to know if his life turned out shitty. So I start flipping through his pages, and it ends up Richard has three sons. All these years my son has had three half brothers.

This is why I called you up this morning. I know my son wants nothing to do with them but I need for you to look them up and show them to him. You all need to know what they look like, so you don't make any mistakes. (She struggles to make her next point) So nothing bad happens. That's not what I'm trying to say. What I mean is.....I know that

y'all like to have...fun. You live a bit of a different life, than...I don't want either of you to accidentally meet one of the half brothers without knowing what they look like. Look, I know you two have been having threesomes lately and I don't want y'all to sleep with one of his brothers by mistake. He didn't tell you I knew? Yah, told me all about it. Well, he didn't tell me, per se.

I had picked him up from the airport on one of his last trips here. He insists on booking flights out of Nashville. Even though we have a perfectly good airport not ten miles from the house. So it's a little more expensive. You know how long of a drive it is from Knoxville to Nashville? Three hours, and that's if you don't hit traffic along the way. Luckily this time around I had his sister in the car, so that helped the trip go by a little faster. We load his stuff in the car, and of course he's hungry. We decided to eat at the Steak and Shake cause it's the only restaurant for miles that doesn't cost an arm and a leg. I let the kids order my unsweet tea, and head to the bathroom. When I come back out I hear my son telling his sister about how ya'll been... yah know, entertaining guest. Now, my kids are free to do whatever floats their boat. It's their lives, but why did they feel the need to talk about such things in the middle of the Steak and Shake? It's a family restaurant. If you're dying to talk about your sexual escapades go to the Texas Road House. They encourage that kinda language. Listen to me going on and on. I don't want to keep you from getting to work. Would you please talk some sense into him, and show him these boys. Better safe than sorry, yah know what I mean. You take care now. Oh, and accept my Farmville requests.

*Transition. LEIGHA transforms the space into a voting center. It is the evening of the 2016 election. Leigha walks into a booth. She pauses for a moment and reads over the ballot. She has a tough decision to make, but can't get herself to make it. She comes down stage to the audience*



## **Pizza and Politics**

### **LEIGHA**

You don't talk about politics in public. It's one of the three conversation topics you're supposed to avoid. Religion, money, and politics. You just don't touch them. Religion is fine as long as you both are on the same page. Mostly everyone I know is a Christian, so I haven't had much blow back with that one. I don't recommend diving into the differences between Baptists, Catholics, and Protestants unless you're eager to lose a friend. You gotta test the waters on that one. Money is an interesting one. I will never talk about money while I'm at work. What I make is between me and my superior. If it comes time for a raise though, you bet your sweet ass I'll be snooping around to make sure I get the best deal. Religion and money are flexible in my book. There are certain times when you can bring them into conversation, but politics is always a hard no. You think you know someone then they bring up their wacky political views. Politics can make the smartest person look like a jack-ass.

It's an odd sensation when your children become politically involved. One moment they're screaming about Barney, the next they're screaming about climate change. I've got two ends of the spectrum in my family. My daughter can't be bothered with politics. She is too busy working full time and being a mother. I don't care what anyone says, being a mom is a full time job. It may not come with a 401k, but it's hard work. Should she take the time to register to vote? Yes, but she has a lot of her plate. Then, there's my son. It's funny how two kids can grow up in the same house and turn out so different. Nothing exhausts me more than listening to my son's political rants. Inequality this, and institutionalized that. Loves to throw around those two dollar words if you know what I mean. I'm glad that he stands up for what he believes, but when I was that age you didn't talk politics. It just wasn't socially acceptable. My son doesn't give a damn. He'll bring up social issues in the middle Sunday dinner if you'd let him. We'll be enjoying a nice meal then all of sudden he'll want everyones thoughts on "sexual discrimination in the workplace." I'm glad he wants to fight for the underdog, but that's not a conversation I want to be having in the middle of the Chili's. God forbid you disagree with him. Boy he knows how to get under my skin. He can make you feel real stupid when he wants to. Anytime I bring in my thoughts on an issue he cuts me off with "Where did you hear that?" "Is that from a credible source." And my personal favorite "Look it up." Nothing gets my blood boiling more than when he finishes a sentence with "look it up." I swear it's the millennial way of saying "Fuck you" in conversation.

A couple of months ago I went to Chicago to see his latest show. Wow. I mean he really surprised me. It was a beautiful show. Afterwards we went out for pizza. I could tell something was on his mind. He had something he wanted to talk to me about but he would get to it. As soon as the food gets there he hits me with the "Who you gonna vote for?" question. He's tactful. Waits till I'm distracted with food before he drops a bomb. He definitely knows who he's dealing with. Normally I would roll my eyes and listen to the inevitable rant that is sure to follow, but something is different. My son is a very confident, and outspoken person, but that isn't the person I see in front of me. He is shaken. He has tears swelling in his eyes. He is afraid. Now, let me be clear about something. Our family doesn't cry. You never let people see you cry. They will take it as a sign of weakness and they will manipulate the shit out of you. My daddy instilled that in me and I passed that on to my kids. That's what shook me the most about this moment. My adult son is fighting back tears, in a public place, because he is shaken. That was the first time I took this election seriously.

I'll be honest I don't know much about Trump. I don't read the news, and all I watch these days is Grey's Anatomy. From what I can tell the guy is just a loon. He says some funny stuff here and there, but no one is taking him seriously anyways. I may not know too much about Trump, but I know way too much about Hilary. You can't trust her as far as you can throw her. I could never get myself to vote for his woman. I know way too much about her. Did you know that she stole curtains from the White House? Yes sir, she did. Now those curtains were put there by the White House's decorating staff. They are meant for anyone that lives there. They aren't hers to take. The woman is a crook. My son defends his case for why she is the better candidate but I think we are screwed either way. Trump's an idiot and Clinton's a liar. If I had any doubts about this woman, that email scandal certainly confirmed them. I could go on all day about Hillary, and that's not why I'm here. I had to watch my son cry. I had to sit in the middle of this restaurant, and see my child stricken with fear. He thinks his life is in danger. He truly believes that if this man wins he could be shipped off to some camp for being gay. No matter how much you disagree with your children when you see a look like that in their eyes you have to pay attention. No matter what the subject is. You need to hear them out.

*She returns to her voting booth*

### **LEIGHA CONT**

So I am here today to practice my right as an American citizen. I am here in the hopes of giving my son a better future. I have a choice to make today and I'm more than

conflicted. I want to support my son, but I don't want to put a person in office I know is pure evil.

*She ponders over the ballot. Takes a breath and fills in the ballot*

**LEIGHA CONT**

Jill Stein.

*Transition: LEIGHA transforms the space into a Smoky Mountains log cabin. It is the evening of her wedding. She is putting away her wedding dress*

## The Wedding Toast

### LEIGHA

For the past few weeks I've been having a recurring dream. It's the day of the wedding. Everything looks perfect. The log cabin we rented looks stunning against the smokey mountain backdrop. The sun is shining without a cloud in sight. You know how the bridal area is in that lofted section of the cabin? Well I'm up there getting ready. I've got my dress on and my hair done. My son is already there waiting to walk me down the aisle when the wedding planner comes in and calls for places. We wait at the top of the stairs as Shania Twain's "From This Moment" starts to play. We prepare to start walking down the steps when the unthinkable happens. I have to pee. Between the IBS and this tiny bladder I'm always having to run to the bathroom. So I look at my son and say "Sorry, but your mama has to pee." I rush to the ladies room, but before I can get everything shoved back in place the songs over and the wedding is ruined. That dream kept playing in my mind all week. So today I made sure to use the bathroom every chance I got. I wanted to be sure when it came time to walk down that aisle my tank was empty. So, the moment of truth. Dress is on, hair's in place, and we are waiting at the top of the stairs. Mr. Man takes his place. Shania starts swelling in the speakers. And I swear to God I start to feel pressure on my bladder. I'm supposed to be walking down the aisle, but I have to use the bathroom. I turn to my son and smile. He says "That wasn't a dream mama. It was a premonition. Now go use the bathroom." I made it down the altar in time, but we had a good laugh along the way. He'll be telling that story for years I'm sure.

*She pulls out some note cards she's kept in her pocket. She flips through them as she reminisces.*

### LEIGHA CONT

I wasn't expecting this. He insisted on giving us a toast, and it really took me by surprise. We can really butt heads sometimes, but then there are moments when I'm truly stunned by his kindness. Let me read it for you

Mama. AKA Sir. [Now I don't ask my kids to call me sir. He's quoting Droopy Dog. That little basset hound from the old Bugs Bunny cartoon.] As I was preparing this speech I kept thinking of some of the amazing fights this family has had. [Can you believe he put that in there?] Fights at Christmas, fights at dinner, fights with Laurel. Mama loves to fight. [By now my damn jaw is on the ground] But this is one of her best qualities. When Mama loves you she'll fight for you. [See how he starts off with something shocking then

makes it into something sweet?] When I was two, I wore nothing but cut-off jeans and cowboy boots. Even when others criticized, Mama fought for me to wear what I wanted. Because when she loves you she fights for you. When it came time for high school we were not zoned for the more arts centered school. So mama wrote a letter to William Blount telling them what an asset I would be to their theatre program. Because when she loves you she fights for you. Finally, when I came out as gay, Mama never threw me out, Mama never judged me, Mama fought for me to live my life as my most authentic self. [That had me fighting tears. I'll be honest with yah. Then, he turns to Mr. Man and says] CJ this is the wonderful partner you have chosen to spend your life with. Ground her when she needs it. Support her in her moments of strength and admire her when she allows you to see weakness. Keep her fight alive. [Oh this next part gets a little silly ] Some tips for lasting marriage with my mother. Screaming doesn't always equate anger

*She makes a face at the audience*

**LEIGHA CONT**

If she repeatedly interrupts you it only means she is very excited to share her point of view with you. Most importantly. Do not EVER give this woman a piece of cake with cool whip frosting.

*She bursts into laughter*

**LEIGHA CONT**

[Boy that is me to a tea] We like you and would hate to see you make that mistake. A toast to the couple. Mama and CJ may your life be filled with love, laughter and endless amounts of butter cream. Cheers

*Blackout. End of Play*