

ERIC

"He Said, She Shed"

Written by E.J. Rupert

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Jimmy Rupe Productions
Milwaukee, WI
(414) 550-0547
ejrupert@yahoo.com

INT. ERIC'S DORM ROOM - DAY

ERIC NELSON, 18, black, enters his home.

ERIC

Hi, honey, I'm home!

His girlfriend, BERNIECE WILLIAMS, 18, black, sulks in the couch. His nephew, WILL, 2, wallows in his playpen.

BERNIECE

From what?

WILL

To what?

ERIC

(flatly)

No place like home, indeed.

BERNIECE

Quit saying, "home"! We're staying in a dorm room that you're not even supposed to be in!

WILL

And I can't even go outside and play!

ERIC

(to Will)

You're two! You only eat, poop, and sleep!

WILL

But I like to have choices.

ERIC

And to answer your question, Berniece, I came home from job-hunting!

BERNIECE

What about your DJ thing? You ain't doin' that anymore?

ERIC

Actually, I'm doing it right now.

He picks up his phone and speaks on it.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Yeah, ya'll, DJ Illson in the cloud! Hope you enjoyed that first dance by the wedding couple. Now check out this track!

He hangs up.

BERNIECE

(flatly)

Whoa, look at that dedication for the art.

ERIC

Don't forget that I had that closed captioning job.

INT. ROOM - ON THE TV - FLASHBACK

On the basketball court is a MAN who SINGS, "The Star-Spangled Banner".

MAN

"Oh, say, can you see..."

The lyrics appear on the screen in live, typewritten fashion. The crowd SINGS ALONG.

MAN (CONT'D)

"By the dawn's early light..."

"(AUDIENCE SINGS ALONG)" appears on screen.

MAN (CONT'D)

"What so proudly we hail'd..."

"(LIGHTS WORKING PROPERLY)" appears on screen.

MAN (CONT'D)

"At the twilight's last gleaming?"

"(ONE GUY NOT STANDING UP. MIGHT BE CONTROVERSIAL)" appears on screen.

SFX: Man continues SINGING. Rapid footsteps off-screen.

"(IDIOT GETS THROWN OUT)" appears on screen.

ERIC (O.C.)

AAAUGHH!

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

ERIC

(to Berniece)

I don't see you trying to make this family thing work!

BERNIECE

I've been trying to take care of Will here. I thought he would be like "Stewie", but he's more like "Scrappy"!

WILL

(chuckles)

Scrappy? I love that little dog!

Eric and Berniece stare at him.

WILL (CONT'D)

(shrugs)

What?

ERIC

But I am trying, Berniece.

BERNIECE

I know. Sorry, baby. But maybe we should slow down on this family thing until stuff improves.

ERIC

Yeah, maybe. So, how's about some makeup sex?

BERNIECE

No!

ERIC

See? We're acting like a married couple already!

BERNIECE

Really?

(pause)

Then we'll have sex, but I won't enjoy it!

ERIC

That still gives married-couple vibes.

BERNIECE

Do you want some or not?

ERIC

Okay!

They both walk to their bedroom.

WILL
 (sighs)
 For all this, I could've stayed with Mom.
 Or inside of Mom.

INT. TIMMY'S PLACE - DAY

TIMMY ROBERTS, 40's, white, wearing his usual apron and chef's hat over his clothes, walks through his restaurant and speaks on his phone.

TIMMY
 Hello, Timmy's Place.
 (pause)
 No, come on down. Our customers don't
 need reservations.

He walks past GINA RICHARDS, 20's, black, who sits at a booth and looks at her food.

GINA
 (frowns)
 We already have them.

Her boyfriend, MARTY O'DELL, 20's, black, approaches her booth with a bouquet of flowers and balloons.

MARTY
 Happy Valentine's Day, Geenie!

GINA
 Aww, Marty!

MARTY
 I got you the three things you like:
 balloons, flowers, and public display!

GINA
 You do know what I like!

Timmy walks behind the bar, where his bartender, IKE SWANSON, black, fixes drinks. Eric's stepfather, MATT JAMES, 40's, black, sits at the bar with Berniece's father, XAVIER, and OFFICER YVETTE TOWNSEND, both 40's, black. PETER McNAIR, 30's, white, also sits at the bar.

PETER
 Look at Marty O'Dell, one-upping us guys
 again.

TIMMY
 He still got that NFL money. He can
 afford it.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

It doesn't cost that much to buy gifts for the woman you love. I wish I had someone to do that for me.

MATT

Yvette, you had someone to do that for you.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Someone who mattered, I mean.

XAVIER

(to Matt)

What are you getting Rhonda?

MATT

I'm still deciding. I'm sorta glad she's out of town, so she doesn't see this!

He points to Gina's gift.

IKE

(in his "surfer-dude" voice)

Well, you have time to hit up the half-off sales by the time she comes back.

MATT

Yep. Why mess with tradition?

OFFICER TOWNSEND

(scoffs)

Look at ya'll. It's no surprise most of you men are single!

She lets out a loud BURP, then clears her throat.

PETER

Well, why can't women do things for us? Why can't we get showered with stuff on V-Day?

XAVIER

(calls out)

Hey, Gina, nice gifts! What are you getting Marty there?

GINA

I, uh...

She "trails off", mumbles, and eats her burger.

PETER

Nice! Real nice!

OFFICER TOWNSEND

We bear your children, cook, clean, and get paid less. We deserve to get pampered.

MATT

And we work long hours and pay the bills! We deserve some of that, too!

IKE

Tell me neither of you two will be spokespeople for your sexes.

PETER

You know, I have a good mind not to get Cynthia anything today!

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Ya'll divorced.

PETER

Doesn't matter! I don't even wanna think about getting any woman a gift today!

He stands up.

PETER (CONT'D)

In fact, we should take a stand and boycott this holiday, until women gives us what we want!

XAVIER

(to Timmy, whispers)
Who is he again?

TIMMY

(whispers)
I don't know, but he's making good points. And keeps buying drinks.

IKE

(to Timmy)
You know, like, we could have an anti-Valentine's Day party here!

TIMMY

That's been done.

IKE

But with a twist, though! Instead of "Ladies' Night", call it, "Men's Night"! Nobody but men can enter on V-Day!

TIMMY

No way! Men flock to where lots of women are! It's not really the same the other way around!

XAVIER

But what's one day out of the year? And it'll give all us guys a place to stand our ground!

PETER

Then we could post it online and have it trending!

XAVIER

I can always go back to having women reject me the next day! It's time to turn the tables!

MATT

They may have something, Tim. You know, I may do my own protest! I'ma tell Rhonda, "No bedroom magic from me!"

TIMMY

How can you protest against something you're already not getting? That ain't fair!

He and the patrons GIGGLE.

MATT

Ha, ha. Come to my new home, Timmy, and let's plan this out.

TIMMY

Alright.

INT. DUMBECK MANSION - DAY

Matt opens the front door. Timmy stands there and enters.

TIMMY

What's up, Matt?

MATT

Hey, Tim.

Matt grabs Timmy by his shirt.

EXT. DUMBECK MANSION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Timmy is tossed out the door.

TIMMY
AARRRRRGHHH!!

SFX: Timmy CRASHES into some trash cans off-screen.

MATT
(calls out)
You had to have seen that coming!

TIMMY (O.C.)
I never got thrown out of a mansion
before.

MATT
Yeah, cool, huh?

He SLAMS the door.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY - LATER

Eric paces back and forth. His brother, BILLY, 20's,
kneels underneath the grand piano and tries to tune it.

ERIC
Billy, I bothered everyone else about
this but you.

BILLY
Oh, what is it now?

ERIC
I need to show Berniece that I can be a
good husband. You know, make her happy.
You know what a woman wants. You've been
in and out of relationships.

Billy comes out from underneath.

BILLY
Yeah, but with the same woman.

ERIC
I have the same woman, too! And if I
don't make things better, she's gonna
leave me!

Enter ELEANOR DUMBECK, 19, white. She carries a stack of
mail.

ELEANOR

Eric, your mail keeps coming to the dorm!

Eric takes the mail from her.

ERIC

I can explain, Eleanor.

ELEANOR

I hops so. This is about as weird as you, Berniece, and Billy's son constantly hanging around the place.

ERIC

I thought I changed my home address.

ELEANOR

(sighs)

Eric, listen carefully. You did change your home address. You moved, remember? When you move from one place to another, your address changes.

ERIC

No, Eleanor, I mean with the post off...never mind. Since you're here, help us figure out this problem.

ELEANOR

Oh, you two don't have to fight. You can both have me!

ERIC AND BILLY

What?

ELEANOR

(rapidly)

What?

BILLY

What did you just say?

ELEANOR

I said, "How can I help you?"

ERIC

Well, what is it that makes you women happy?

ELEANOR

Oh, there are a lot of things! But if you're talking about Berniece, it might be better to ask her.

Billy climbs underneath the piano and tries to tune it.
Eleanor taps him.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Billy, let me.

BILLY

Uh, okay.

He swaps places with Eleanor, who takes a few seconds,
MAKES REPAIR NOISES, then climbs back out. She PLAYS a
few melodic chords.

ELEANOR

That'll do it!

She exits. Eric and Billy stare at each other. Eric
climbs underneath the piano.

SFX: Loud SNAP!

He swaps spaces with Billy.

ERIC

Talk to Berniece? She's barely talking to
me now! What do I do?

BILLY

I don't know. Maybe give her some space?

ERIC

Give her space? That's it! I'll build her
a she shed!

BILLY

Huh?

ERIC

You know, give Berniece her own little
room where she can put all her girly
crap! She'll love it!

BILLY

If you say so.

ERIC

I need to hit the store! Later!

Eric hurries out.

BILLY

(scoffs)

"She shed".

His father, JUNIOR, 40's, calls out.

JUNIOR (O.C.)
Son, are you done tuning the piano?

BILLY
(calls out)
No!

JUNIOR (O.C.)
Alright, well, keep at it!

INT. ERIC'S DORM ROOM - BEDROOM - LATER

Eric walks behind Berniece. He covers her eyes with his hands. Will crawls behind them.

BERNIECE
Eric, are we here yet?

ERIC
Yep! Take a look!

He removes his hands. Berniece looks around.

BERNIECE
What am I looking at?

ERIC
Your very own she shed!

BERNIECE
A she shed?

ERIC
Yep, I made it with you in mind! Check it out!

He walks her around the room.

ERIC (CONT'D)
When you come home from a long day of...whatever you do, you can chill in this beanbag chair.

BERNIECE
Oh. Why are there all these framed photos of you around?

ERIC

When you're feeling low, and I'm out working my 9-to-5, which I'm still working on getting, by the way, you can look at these walls to think of me!

BERNIECE

Uh huh.

ERIC

And remember when Jordan Poole came to sign autographs? You said that he was real cute? Well, here is his framed jersey on that wall! Now you can fantasize about him without bothering me with it.

BERNIECE

Uh, Eric, this looks more like a room for you than me.

ERIC

Don't be silly. Like I would fantasize about Jordan Poole.

(pause)

Although he is pretty well put together. He must work out all the time.

(pause)

Where was I?

BERNIECE

Eric, none of these things scream "she shed" to me!

ERIC

But these are all things that you like!

BERNIECE

Yeah, okay. Thanks. But this doesn't change what we talked about earlier. I'm gonna take a walk.

Berniece exits.

ERIC

But...

WILL

Wow, what a bummer.

ERIC

I'll say. This was gonna double as a Valentine's Day gift.

WILL

What are you gonna do now, Unc?

ERIC

I guess I need to get more in touch with my feminine side.

WILL

Before you can touch hers?

ERIC

Hey! But yeah.

WILL

So what does that mean, bingeing "Sex and the City"?

ERIC

No, man!

WILL

Uncle Eric, it's just you and me here.

Eric looks around.

ERIC

Okay, let's cue it up.

They begin to exit.

WILL

Then let's watch some "Magic Mike" movies!

ERIC

Uh, no!

WILL

They have good plots!

INT. TIMMY'S PLACE - EVENING

Timmy enters his restaurant from upstairs. He looks around and sees men CHATTING and dancing to loud dance music PLAYING. Strobe lights flash off and on. He walks behind the bar and approaches Ike.

TIMMY

Uh, Ike, what's going on here?

IKE

Dude, you said, "Men's Night"!

Timmy sees two men dancing close to each other.

TIMMY

Yeah, but don't these men look a little different to you?

IKE

Like, what do you mean?

A MAN, wearing a pink shirt, interjects.

MAN #1

Yeah, what do you mean? My Twitter fingers are itching!

He holds up a phone.

TIMMY

Nothing! Carry on!

MAN #1

Good.

(to Ike)

Another Cosmo, please!

He leaves. Xavier and Peter approach the bar.

PETER

Guys, I didn't know this was what you had in mind.

TIMMY

It's not!

IKE

What? The place is busier than usual! And there ain't any women here!

XAVIER

Except for them.

Eleanor's mother, RENEE CHAPMAN, 40's, approaches the bar with her girlfriend.

RENEE

Timmy, it's about time you catered to us!

TIMMY

No, Renee, it's supposed to be Men's Night!

RENEE

But we saw the guys come in and thought that it was Pride Night!

Her girlfriend and others CHEER.

TIMMY
No, it's not like that!

The man returns.

MAN #1
Not like what?

TIMMY
Look, this ain't a gay bar!

MAN #1
Whaddaya got against gays?

MAN #2
Or gay bars?

The music abruptly STOPS, and the patrons STOP chatting.

TIMMY
Nothing at all, but this place ain't it,
that's all!

MAN #1
That's it! I'm canceling you!

TIMMY
I don't know you! How can you cancel
someone that don't know you?

MAN #1
With one push of the "Send" button!

He attempts to click on his phone. ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND,
wearing his usual muscle shirt, approaches him. He speaks
in his usual BOOMING voice.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND
Hold it, man! Why don't you guys stay
here?
(to Timmy and his friends)
I know a place where we can finish this
night! Follow me!

Timmy and his friends follow him. The music and chatter
RESUME. Peter's daughter, POLLY, 13, white, enters.

PETER
Polly, what are you doing here?

POLLY
Came to get a burger, honest!

IKE
 (to Polly)
 Well, the kitchen's closed, so follow
 them out.

POLLY
 Why follow the guys? I'd rather stay
here!

IKE
 Beat it!

POLLY
 Aww!

Polly exits with the guys.

MAN #2
 (to another man, points to
 Eleanor's boyfriend)
 Hmmph. Why are all those men leaving with
him?

INT. SAMPSON'S FOOD & LIQUOR - SAME

Eric pushes a shopping cart of products and Will in a car
 seat. They approach the cash register, where KATHY
 HUGHES, a black teen who wears Goth-like gear and makeup,
 works.

ERIC
 Kathy, I know my "Niggear" clothing line
 is discontinued, but the bargain bin??

KATHY
 (dull voice)
 They're in high demand.

ERIC
 Really?

KATHY
 High demand by our manager to get rid of
 'em.

ERIC
 Oh.

KATHY
 We couldn't even give them away. And we
 tried to.

ERIC

Alright, I get it! Ring us up.

KATHY

How come you're not out with Berniece this Valentine's Day?

ERIC

I'm fixin' up her she shed. That's her gift. Here's some more stuff for her room.

Kathy rings up a magazine.

KATHY

A "Playboy" calendar?

ERIC

We watched a porno, and one of the ladies who she said was pretty is in this calendar. I figure she'd like it.

KATHY

Men really are clueless.

WILL

Don't lump me with them, ma'am.

Enter GRETCHEN "GRETCH" JACKSON, white, with a gun pointed at Kathy.

GRETCH

Alright, girly, freeze!

ERIC

Aw, come on, Gretch, not now! We gotta get back home!

KATHY

And I don't know the combination to the safe.

GRETCH

That ain't what I want. Get from behind there!

Kathy steps away from the register. Gretch stands next to it and puts on an apron, and raises her gun.

GRETCH (CONT'D)

This time, I want all of you to buy from me!

ERIC

Huh?

GRETCH

Robbin' ya'll is too easy! You guys are gonna get in line and buy whatever price I set!

KATHY

Why?

GRETCH

Just because! And I need work experience for my resume! Nobody wants to hire a criminal! Now everybody get in line! You over there, come on!

She points to COACH MALDONADO, Puerto Rican, who wears her gym-teacher outfit and whistle.

COACH MALDONADO

But I have over ten items.

GRETCH

Who cares? You're in my store now!

(speaks on mic)

And price check on eggs!

(off the mic)

I always wanted to say that!

ERIC

Well, this store is already robbing us.

GRETCH

See? He gets it!

(to Eric)

Just for that, you and your kid can go.

WILL

(to Eric)

But...

ERIC

Don't even ask!

Eric and Will exit. Maldonado approaches the register.

COACH MALDONADO

I have a coupon for this milk here.

Gretch looks at the coupon.

GRETCH

This expired! But mistakes happen. Take this milk for ten cents.

COACH MALDONADO

Really?

GRETCH

(cocks her gun)

I ain't playin'!

KATHY

We're gonna be losing money.

(pause)

Man, she really thought this through.

INT. ERIC'S DORM ROOM - BEDROOM - LATER

Eric and Will enter the bedroom. The guys that left Timmy's Place are gathered in the room. The TV BLASTS, and the guys CHATTER, eat and drink.

ERIC

Hey! What's going on here?

PETER

It's our Anti-Valentine's Day Party! Guys only!

TIMMY

Hey, Eric, love what you did with the place!

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

Yeah, I'm digging this man-cave vibe here! But we took the pics of you down. It was kinda weird.

ERIC

No, you guys ain't supposed to be here!

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

You guys ain't supposed to be here! It's still my room, remember?

ERIC

Now's not the time for facts, man! Berniece is gonna be back any minute!

PETER

Then tell her to kick rocks! It's Guys Night here!

The guys CHEER.

PETER (CONT'D)
 (to Xavier)
 No offense.

XAVIER
 None taken!

They both CLICK their beer bottles together. Eleanor enters and approaches her boyfriend.

ELEANOR
 Honey, what's this?

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND
 Don't worry, sweetie-kins, we're just having a Men's Only party.

XAVIER
 We're standing up to the notion that we have to give V-Day gifts to you women!

ELEANOR
 Oh, and is that why you're here, Eric?

ERIC
 No! I'm supposed to be building...
 (pause)
 ...rapport with the guys!

ELEANOR
 Well, I'm the RA, and I say you guys have to shut it down!

PETER
 Coming from a woman! Big surprise!

The men CLAMOR in agreement.

ELEANOR
 And speaking of women, we just had a gathering of our own. You don't have to give us gifts, but don't expect us to give you your gifts, either.

XAVIER
 Ya'll already don't give us gifts!

ELEANOR
 Your very special gifts.

She looks at her boyfriend. He and the guys look at each other. He SHUTS OFF the TV.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

Party's over!

He walks with Eleanor, as the other partygoers exit.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

(CONT'D)

So, baby, let's go to your room, so I can get my gift!

ELEANOR

No, I'm a little tired.

They exit.

ERIC

Alright, Will, I need to fix up this room! I don't care if it takes all...

He PLOPS in a chair and SNORES.

WILL

Works for me.

Will SNORES along with Eric.

INT. ERIC'S DORM ROOM - BEDROOM - DAY

Eric walks Eleanor's boyfriend around the bedroom. It is decorated with pastel colors and has other pretty decorations. Will sits on the floor and plays with toys.

ERIC

Now take a look and tell me that this doesn't scream, "she shed"!

Eric points out various items.

ERIC (CONT'D)

See? An automatic air freshener!

The air freshener SPRAYS OUT a fragrance.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

(sniffs)

Mmmn, cherry lavender!

ERIC

And there's a pink rug underneath this reddish chair, right in front of this coffee table with some of her romance novels.

He picks up the remote and FLIPS ON the TV.

ERIC (CONT'D)

And on the TV? Nothing but channels geared towards women!

He points to the wall.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Here are posters of her favorite rappers and male models. And lookit!

He pulls up an object.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

Wow, a place mat! I've heard about it, but never seen it!

ERIC

That'll go in our dining room. So the feminine theme can even extend to the rest of the house.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

Well, Eric, you did it. You made absolutely no man want to step in this room.

ERIC

You gotta get deep, deep down and find out what your woman's wants and needs are. I did that, and then I did what I had to do.

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

Call her girlfriends and have them fix up the place for you?

ERIC

Damn right!

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

This definitely me wanna shack up with Eleanor more.

He exits.

ERIC

Alright, Will. Now we gotta sit back and wait for Berniece to come home. She'll be excited!

THE NEXT MORNING

Eric and Will sit in the same spots.

ERIC

She probably spent the night at her dad's house. She'll be here soon.

WILL

Yep.

LATER

They sit in the same spots.

ERIC

She's getting out of school. She'll be here.

WILL

Isn't today Saturday?

ERIC

They have weekend tutoring sessions! She does need to graduate!

WILL

I thought you said she was acing her courses.

ERIC

Quiet!

LATER

SFX: KNOCK on door!

The door opens. Berniece stands there.

BERNIECE

Okay, I'm here.

It is revealed that Berniece is on the front door step of the Nelson house. The person who opened the door for her is Billy.

BILLY

But why are you here?

BERNIECE

Because your brother is being a jerk!

She drags her suitcases inside.

BILLY

Yeah, he kinda has that effect on folks,
huh?

BERNIECE

I'll go back to him, Billy, but not yet.
Maybe when he sees me here, he'll learn
how to treat me right!

Berniece sits down. Junior enters from the kitchen. He
looks at Berniece's luggage.

JUNIOR

What's going on here?

BERNIECE

Well, your son Eric...

JUNIOR

Eric? Say no more. Welcome aboard.

He exits.

INT. ERIC'S DORM ROOM - BEDROOM - LATER

Eric and Will sit in their same spots.

ERIC

Okay, I don't think she's coming.

WILL

That sucks.

ERIC

I know. It was her turn to buy your
diapers.

He gets up and picks up Will.

WILL

Back to Sampson's?

ERIC

Yeah. Gretch is selling the jumbo packs
for a quarter.

They exit.

THE END