

WHEN DUTY FLEES

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

JERRY, mid thirties, sits on the ground with his back against the garage door. He wears a blue polo shirt with PHOTO ADOBE embroidered on the pocket in white letters.

He stares into space, his mouth slightly agape. He occasionally shakes his head slowly from side to side.

After a few moments, ANGIE, early thirties, emerges from the house and makes her way down the sidewalk. She's dressed in pajama pants and a cami top, and wears a pair of big blue slippers.

She stops at the edge of the grass, picks up a newspaper lying at her feet, and turns back toward the house. She stops when she notices Jerry sitting on the ground. A look of confusion crosses her face.

ANGIE

What are you doing?

Jerry doesn't answer, just stares.

ANGIE

Jerry?

Jerry slowly shakes his head from side to side. Angie rears back and flings the paper at him. It zips past him, just grazing the tip of his nose.

The sudden jolt startles him out of his daze, and he looks over to Angie, standing at the edge of the grass with her hands on her hips.

JERRY

What did you do that for?

ANGIE

Cause you wouldn't answer me.

JERRY

You know, you could try talking a little louder before you start chucking foreign objects at me.

ANGIE

It's not foreign. That's the local paper.

Jerry nods his head nonchalantly.

JERRY

Funny.

ANGIE

So, what are you doing out here?

JERRY

Just sitting here. Collecting my thoughts.

ANGIE

Aren't you late for work?

JERRY

No.

ANGIE

Did you get a new start time?

JERRY

No.

ANGIE

Then I'd say you're about an hour late.

Jerry turns slightly red with frustration.

JERRY

Listen, I'm not late for work, alright?

ANGIE

What crawled up your ass and died?

JERRY

Nothing. I'm just a little freaked out right now.

Angie makes her way over to Jerry. Jerry stands up to greet her.

ANGIE

What happened?

JERRY

I don't know.

ANGIE

Then what are you freaked out for?

Jerry takes Angie by the hand.

JERRY

Okay, what I'm about to tell you is going to sound really weird. Hell, I can't even explain it myself, but just hear me out.

Angie raises her hand, taking Jerry's. She looks up at him.

ANGIE

Whatever it is, I'm sure it's fine. Just tell me.

Jerry sighs and looks toward the ground.

JERRY

I lost my job.

Angie's eyes open wide with surprise.

ANGIE

You what!

JERRY

I lost my job.

ANGIE

How could you let this happen? You know we've been talking about having a baby and maybe buying a house. And what do you do? You go and get fired.

JERRY

I didn't say I got fired. I said I lost my job.

ANGIE

Same difference.

JERRY

Angie, you don't understand. I didn't get fired. I lost my job.

ANGIE

It's still the same thing!

JERRY

When I say lost, I mean lost like someone loses their keys or their wallet lost.

Angie regains her composure, but confusion sets in on her face.

ANGIE  
You can't find your job?

JERRY  
No. Like I said, I lost it.

Angie places her hands on Jerry's shoulders.

ANGIE  
Alright, honey. What you do, is  
you get in your car, and you drive  
down to Third Avenue. Do you  
understand? Third Avenue.

Jerry pushes away Angie's hands and takes a step back.

JERRY  
Don't patronize me, Angie. I know  
where my job is. It's just not  
there!

ANGIE  
That's ridiculous. How could a  
photo booth in the middle of a  
parking lot just up and disappear?

JERRY  
I don't know! Why do you think  
I've been sitting here like this?

ANGIE  
Did you talk to the manager in the  
Mega Saver Mart?

JERRY  
Yeah.

ANGIE  
And?

INT. MEGA SAVER MART - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jerry stands with the STORE MANAGER, late twenties. He wears a red vest with Mega Saver Mart printed on it.

STORE MANAGER  
Like I told you, Mega Saver Mart  
has no affiliation with Photo  
Adobe, and thus has no knowledge of  
the whereabouts of your booth.

JERRY

Yeah, but I just thought that maybe you or somebody else might have seen where it went to or who took it.

STORE MANAGER

Like I told you, Mega Saver Mart has no affiliation with Photo Adobe, and thus has no knowledge of the whereabouts of your booth.

JERRY

Why do you keep saying that? I only asked you a simple question.

STORE MANAGER

Like I told you, Mega Saver Mart has no affiliation with Photo Adobe, and thus has no knowledge of the whereabouts of your booth.

Jerry can only stare at the store manager. After a moment, he lifts his head slightly.

JERRY

You guys got any glass cleaner on sale?

The store manager perks up, a cheesy smile now plastered on his face.

STORE MANAGER

Absolutely! Follow me right this way, sir.

The store manager leads Jerry down an aisle.

JERRY

Great. I could really use some to clean up the windows on the photo booth.

The store manager stops and his smile disappears. He turns to Jerry.

STORE MANAGER

Like I told you, Mega Saver Mart has no affiliation with Photo Adobe, and thus has no knowledge of the whereabouts of your booth.

Jerry throws up his hands and heads for the exit.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY - BACK TO REALITY

JERRY

Mega Saver Mart has no affiliation with Photo Adobe, and thus has no knowledge of the whereabouts of your booth.

ANGIE

What?

JERRY

Please don't make me say it again.

ANGIE

That's a load of crap. I bet they took it.

JERRY

Why would they take it?

ANGIE

Maybe they're gonna start developing their own photos, and they wanna take out the competition. You know how those big box stores are. Cut throat.

JERRY

I guess that's one theory.

ANGIE

Let's go.

Angie walks over to the car and opens the door.

JERRY

Where?

ANGIE

Down to the store. Check things out a little.

JERRY

I was just down there.

ANGIE

Yeah, but you may have missed a vital clue. I'll use my women's intuition to see if any foul play was involved.

JERRY

What are you, Sherlock Homes now?

ANGIE

I'm bored and you don't have a job. May as well do something.

Angie gets in the car and closes the door.

JERRY

I have a job. I just don't know where it is.

Jerry walks to the car and gets in on the passenger's side. Angie pulls out of the driveway and they head off down the street.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The car pulls into an empty space. Only a few other cars are in the parking lot, spread out in various places near the front of Mega Saver Mart.

Jerry and Angie exit the car. Jerry points to a nearby light pole.

JERRY

See? I told you it's gone.

Angie puts a hand to her chin in a faux detective pose.

ANGIE

Yeah, but I just wanted to see if there was any evidence of foul play.

JERRY

Alright, detective. Any evidence of foul play?

ANGIE

No.

JERRY

Wonderful. Glad to hear we just wasted our time.

ANGIE

Hey, I just wanted to check it out.



JERRY

Jesus you must be bored if you  
wanna check out an empty parking  
lot.

ANGIE

Just a little.

JERRY

So, we've established that the  
booth is indeed gone, and there's  
no evidence of foul play, whatever  
the hell that means. Can we go get  
some breakfast? Maybe a newspaper  
so I can start looking for another  
job?

ANGIE

Let's think about this for a  
second, here.

JERRY

There's nothing to think  
about. It's gone.

ANGIE

Yeah, but we can think about why.

JERRY

I just don't get it. I'm a nice  
guy, I show up to work every day,  
and this happens.

ANGIE

I got an idea.

JERRY

I'm listening.

ANGIE

Maybe it was...

Angie points toward the sky.

JERRY

What? You think God is punishing  
me? I'm such a bad person that he  
just decided to make my job  
disappear?

ANGIE

Not God, you dope. Aliens. Maybe  
aliens took the booth.

JERRY  
What would aliens want with my  
photo booth?

ANGIE  
They do a lot of  
traveling. Probably take a lot of  
pictures.

Angie giggles.

JERRY  
That's not funny.

ANGIE  
Sorry.

Angie looks around and notices a wire sticking out near the  
bottom of the lamp post.

ANGIE  
Look at that.

She points to the wire.

JERRY  
That's just the electrical hookup  
for the booth. The just unplugged  
it when they took it.

Angie moves in for a closer inspection. She reaches down  
near the wire. Jerry throws his hands up.

JERRY  
Don't touch that!

Ange reaches inside the crevice where the wires are and  
pulls out a piece of paper. It's a photo of a man dressed  
in an Elvis suit.

Angie giggles and walks over to Jerry. She shows him the  
picture and he shrugs his shoulders.

JERRY  
Yeah. He's one of my  
customers. Comes in all the time.

ANGIE  
Dressed like that?

JERRY  
Yeah, he's an Elvis impersonator.

ANGIE  
He's a thief.

JERRY  
What?

ANGIE  
You said he comes here all the time. He probably took the booth so he can develop his own pictures and not have to pay for them.

JERRY  
That's ridiculous.

ANGIE  
I don't see you coming up with any ideas.

JERRY  
I'll tell you what I think it is.

ANGIE  
What?

JERRY  
I bet Photo Adobe decided to move their operation down to Mexico. Wouldn't surprise me if my booth was sitting on some corner in Tijuana right now.

ANGIE  
That's it? That's your theory?

JERRY  
Think about. Photo Adobe. Kinda Mexican sounding, ain't it?

ANGIE  
I guess.

JERRY  
Yep. Looks like I've fallen victim to the wrath of Juan.

ANGIE  
Oh! Like that movie.

JERRY  
What movie?

ANGIE  
The Star Trek one. The wrath of  
Juan.

JERRY  
That's Khan.

ANGIE  
You sure?

JERRY  
Trust me, it's Khan. C'mon, let's  
just get out of here.

They make their way toward the car. Just as they're about to get in, a red pickup truck pulls up, and two men emerge. The first is RED, early sixties, and the other is an ELECTRICIAN, early forties.

A look of surprise is on Red's face as he looks at Jerry.

RED  
Hey Jerry. What are you doing  
here?

JERRY  
I came into work this morning and  
saw that the booth was gone, so I  
went home and told Angie about it,  
and she wanted to check it out.

Red smiles at Angie, who glares back at him. Red's smile fades.

RED  
Never thought I'd be so upset to  
see a woman in her pajamas.

Angie looks down, realizing that she had left the house without changing. She looks to Jerry.

ANGIE  
Why didn't you remind me to change?

JERRY  
Hey, you were in such a hurry to  
get here, I figured you just didn't  
care.

She looks down again, examines her shirt briefly, and then back to Jerry.

ANGIE

Are my nipples sticking out?

Jerry doesn't respond. She turns to Red and the electrician.

RED

Yeah.

The electrician raises his hand, putting his thumb and pointer finger about a half inch apart.

ELECTRICIAN

Little bit.

Angie folds her arms across her chest.

JERRY

What are you doing here,  
Red? Looking to send the light  
pole down to Mexico too?

RED

Boy, what the hell are you talking  
about?

JERRY

I know all about how you decided to  
ship the booth down to Mexico  
because of the cheaper labor. I  
just wish you would've had the guts  
to tell me.

Jerry stares Red down, but after a minute Red breaks out into hysterical laughter.

Jerry and Angie look at each other. They both shrug their shoulders.

RED

That's about the funniest damn  
thing I've heard in twenty years.

Angie storms over, getting in Red's face and poking him in the chest.

ANGIE

Oh yeah? Well what do you say to  
us knowing that you're in an evil  
conspiratory plot with an Elvis  
impersonator, who you hired to  
steal the booth so you could cash  
in on the insurance.

Red stops laughing and stares at Angie, but only briefly before breaking into laughter even heavier than before. The electrician joins in.

Angie and Jerry look at each other and shrug their shoulders again. Red goes to the lamp post and leans against it. He wipes a tear from his eye and points to Jerry.

RED

Damn, boy. Your wife's nuttier than you are. I'm gonna have to give you a raise.

JERRY

A raise? I'd just like to have my job back.

RED

Back? You never lost it.

JERRY

So, you didn't send the booth to Mexico?

Red stands up straight.

RED

Hell no! What good would that do me? Even if I was thinking about expanding, I'd still need a booth here.

Jerry raises his arms and spins around once.

JERRY

Then where's the booth, Red?

RED

It's at the fabricators. Didn't you get the memo?

JERRY

What memo?

RED

We decided to replace the booth with a new, more modern one. We took the old one out, cause it was supposed to be ready yesterday, but the fabricators are a little behind so we won't have it till next week. We just came over so he could look at the wiring. Make sure everything's up to code.

Red points at the electrician.

JERRY

I didn't get that memo.

Red scratches his head and then snaps his fingers.

RED

That's right, you were off  
yesterday. Anyway, everyone's off,  
with pay, until the new booth gets  
here. Now you guys go on  
home. Enjoy your vacation.

JERRY

Alright. Thanks Red.

RED

Don't mention it.

Angie and Jerry get into the car. Angie's in the driver's seat. She starts up the car and puts it in gear just as Red taps on the window. She rolls it down.

RED

And you two try not to run into any  
Mexicans or Elvis impersonators on  
your way home.

Red laughs, and Angie fakes a half smile before pulling off.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

The car pulls up and the two get out. They walk toward the house.

JERRY

Well, that ended up being a whole  
lot of nothing.

ANGIE

Not necessarily.

JERRY

What do you mean?

Angie speeds up and steps in front of Jerry, stopping him. She places a finger on his chest and smiles devilishly.

ANGIE

Well, it sounds like you're gonna be off all week, and we were talking about having a baby.

JERRY

Yeah, and?

Angie removes her finger and rolls her eyes.

ANGIE

And...this is as good a time as any for us to start trying.

JERRY

That might not be a bad idea.

ANGIE

Of course not. If nothing else, at least we'll get to screw like rabbits for the next week.

JERRY

Well, they do say that the best thing about kids is making them.

ANGIE

Exactly.

Angie looks down at her shirt.

ANGIE

Can you still see my nipples?

Jerry looks down and smiles.

JERRY

Oh yeah.

Angie nods in satisfaction.

ANGIE

Good. Then we can skip the foreplay.

She grabs him by the shirt and pulls him into the house, closing the door behind them.

THE END