Ass and the Elephant

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EXT. MIDDLE AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Two middle class homes stand next to each other. The house on the left has a slightly overgrown yard. The house on the right has perfectly manicured lawn. A PAPERBOY rides by and delivers to both homes. MAILBOX on the left, covered in ivy, reads THE PARKER’S. Mailbox on the right, with a painted American flag draped around a Bald Eagle, reads THE LIVINGSTON’S.

LENNY PARKER, owner of the house on the left, forward. In his fifties, Lenny is a bit unkept, has thick hair and wears glasses. Lenny holds stack of BLUE POLITICAL SIGNS that he’s about to jab into his yard. But first, he gives a menacing look to his nemesis next door, then pokes a VOTE NO sign into grass.

ROY LIVINGSTON, owner of the house on the right, steps forward. He in his fifties too is neat, polished and has a pot belly. He also carries a stack of political signs, however his are RED. He pokes one into his yard reading VOTE YES. He glares Lenny. The showdown begins.

Both begin lining their yards with signs working their way closer to each other. Back and forth they go trying to trump and cancel out the other’s sign.

While it happens, a MIDDLE EASTERN neighbor watches from across street. His head moves left to right, as if observing a tennis match.

Finally Lenny and Roy reach the edge of their property lines and are face to face each holding one remaining sign. They give each other the stare down then defiantly jab in their final signs into the ground, turn and abruptly march back to their homes.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Lenny looks out his blinds at Roy’s yard and complains to his wife, MITZI.

LENNY
Fascist Freak.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

Roy looks past his curtain at Lenny’s yard and complains to his wife, DONETTE.

ROY
Looney Lefty.
INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

MITZI
(annoyed)
Lenny!

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

DONETTE
(annoyed)
Roy!

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

LENNY
I mean, What’s he trying to turn this country into...

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

ROY
What kind of American is he?

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

MITZI
Aren’t you being a little extreme?

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

DONETTE
You know if you’d lighten up you’d probably have a lot in common.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

LENNY
Ha!

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

ROY
Ha!
INT. BOTH HOMES

We cut back and forth from Lenny in his home to Roy in his. Dialogue runs together making one continuous sentence.

LENNY
The day I hang out with a conniving corporate loving...

ROY
Woodstock wacko weirdo...

LENNY
Nuclear obsessed macho maniac...

ROY
Tree hugging fruitcake.

LENNY
Is the day you can strip me naked...

ROY
Dip me in a big vat of pinko paint...

LENNY
March me around...

ROY
With a giant French flag on my butt...

LENNY
Right in front of the National Rifle Association’s...

ROY
“Give Peace a Chance” parade!

Both men proud of their declarations.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Lenny’s wife is fed up with his outburst, picks up car keys to go shopping.

MITZI
Lenny, you sure know how to ruin a Saturday. I’m going shopping!
LENNY  
(acting innocent)  
What?

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY  
Roy’s wife, fed up as well, leaves.

DONETTE  
Roy, I’ve had it up-to-here with all this! I’m going to lunch.

ROY  
Have fun.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY  
Lenny lets out an aggravated sigh.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY  
Roy lets out an aggravated sigh.

EXT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY  
Mitzi goes to car and notices Donette going to her car too. Both exchange overly sweet greetings. Then under their breath murmur nasty comments.

MITZI  
Hi Donette!

DONETTE  
Hi Mitzi!

MITZI  
How are you?

DONETTE  
Good thanks? (to herself) Love the Mom Jeans.

MITZI  
Oh good! (to herself) See your butt’s got it’s own zip code.
DONETTE
(sweet again)
Bye.

MITZI
Bye.

Mitzi shuts car door. Donette shuts car door. Both cars back out turning into each other. Back fenders almost touch until Mitzi goes forward and exits left as Donette exits right.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Anxious and bored, Lenny paces room. He glances at magazines and NEWSPAPER.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

Roy, paces around house. He glances at magazines and NEWSPAPER on table then readjusts GLASS VASE on mantle.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Lenny opens BLUE PEPSI CAN.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

Roy opens RED COKE CAN.

INT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Lenny casually sips soda and looks out front window. Suddenly Lenny is shocked at what he notices outside.

LENNY
(to himself)
What in the hell!

Lenny rushes outside.

EXT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Like a man on a mission, Lenny bursts out door to the front of his yard. Anger builds as he bends down to pick up the unthinkable...a RED SIGN poking out among a sea of his blue ones. Lenny knows who to blame.
LENNY
(under his breath)
Son of a bitch!

He yanks red sign out and storms to the Livingston’s.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - DAY

Lenny pounds door. There is no answer. Infuriated, he jiggles knob and realizes it’s unlocked. Lenny enters house and looks for Roy.

LENNY
Livingston... Livingston!

Lenny enters kitchen.

LENNY (CONT’D)
Livingston!

Lenny notices Roy, now without shirt, on back patio. Roy, shocked to see Lenny in his home, rushes to enter.

ROY
What are you doing in here?

LENNY
Making a return!

Lenny holds up red sign. Roy looks confused.

LENNY (CONT’D)
Only you would stick this in my yard.

ROY
(laughs) I wish I had.

LENNY
That’s trespassing!

ROY
Trespassing?

LENNY
Yes. Trespassing!

ROY
If you think I’d step foot in that weed infested yard of yours, you’re nuttier than your candidates.
LENNY
Keep your crummy signs outa’ my yard.

ROY
Parker, go back to what ever it is you’ve been smokin’. Oh wait, you guys don’t inhale!

LENNY
Better than being in a party that never exhales!

ROY
Are you sayin’ I’m stupid?! 

LENNY
Well, a smart ass is always better than a dumb elephant.

ROY
Hmmm. Mount Rushmore...Republicans three, Democrats zero!

LENNY
Very clever Mr. Bumper Sticker on the back of some gas guzzler.

ROY
At least my car’s American made you know it all snob.

LENNY
Oh I’m sorry if I think the leader of our nation should be fluent in at least one language.

ROY
Look, leave the damn sign and get out already.

Suddenly Roy looks shocked.

LENNY
Fine by me, the last thing I wanna do is stay here all day staring at your face!

Lenny throws down sign turns to leave but is suddenly stopped in his tracks when he comes face to face with HAND GUN pointed right at his nose. Both are stunned.
NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER

Hi there fellas’.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGSTON LIVINGROOM - DAY

Lenny and Roy are now tied up together in a most unusual fashion. Both on their knees, but instead of being back to back, they’ve been tied chest to chest forcing their faces to practically touch each other. They stare at one another less than an inch apart. Roy’s still shirtless.

A lanky, clumsy male wearing all black carries a large, white fabric sack. Known as the NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER, he nervously closes front curtains.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER

Ok you two, ok. You all just stay there and keep quiet and no one’ll get hurt. I don’t want any funny stuff and no tryin’ to loosen those ropes now cause I don’t wanna...

Robber’s sidetracked by local newspaper on Roy’s table.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER

(CONT’D)

Well I’ll be darn! Would you look at this. (Giggles) The front page! That’s some likeness wouldn’t say?

Robber proudly shows off newspaper covering his face. Paper features a SKETCH of a SMILING Robber wearing a SKI MASK. He then lowers paper revealing himself with same ski mask and smile.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER

(CONT’D)

If Mother saw this she’d be as happy as a tick on a fat dog. (Gets kick out of stardom.) I gotta send this home.

Robber puts paper into bag.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER

(CONT’D)

Anyway...I don’t wanna hear a peep.

Robber turns and begins robbing house. Aggravated, both men are silent. In another room, Robber’s heard crashing into things. Roy breaks silence.
ROY  
(quietly)  
You know this is all your fault.

LENNY  
(stunned)  
My fault!

ROY  
Yes. Your fault.

LENNY  
How do you figure this is my fault?

ROY  
Liberal judges.

LENNY  
Liberal judges?

ROY  
That’s right, if it wasn’t for all those radical nit-wits you elect we’d have Ol’ Hew-Haw locked up.

LENNY  
(collective sigh)

ROY  
Lock ‘em up and throw away the key I say. But noooo, you wanna rehabilitate ‘em. Give ‘em a second chance. Or better yet, let ‘em all go free. Ye Ha!

LENNY  
Well you know, if we had some sort of gun control in this country, guys like him couldn’t waltz in here so easy and make you cower like a pathetic school girl.

ROY  
Oh blame the guns, never the criminals.

LENNY  
Well all I know is that without that “gun”, I would have taken him...

ROY  
(laugh)  
You would have taken him?

LENNY  
Yes, I would have taken him.
ROY
Where? Down to the prison to free some more bad guys.

LENNY
Bad guys...Oh you mean like those white color, retirement swindling crooks you worship. No, I prefer to leave them locked up in their country club cells.

ROY
Oh Ha!

LENNY
Ha!!

Robber notices banter and approaches.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
Hey. Hey!

Lenny and Roy stop bickering.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
(CONT’D)
What is goin’ on? Tell me you two aren’t fight’n?!

LENNY
(acting innocent)
No. We’re not fighting.

ROY
No.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
Don’t piss on my leg and tell me it’s raining.

Roy and Lenny sit quietly.

ROY
Now I said I didn’t want a hear a peep and I mean it. Not a word. You hear? Don’t make come back.

Robber goes back to his business.

Time passes. Growing impatient, Roy and Lenny can’t help but to start banter again.

ROY (CONT’D)
You are gonna get us killed.
LENNY
You’re the one doing all the talking.

ROY
Well if you weren’t so damn annoying to look at.

LENNY
Annoying. You wanna talk about annoying. Your gut pressed against me is annoying. It’s like I’m tied to some over inflated balloon from the Macy’s Parade. Here’s a hint, try a salad!

ROY
Well at least I don’t have the worst case of Halitosis on the planet.

Lenny is shocked at this accusation.

ROY (CONT’D)
I mean your breath is doing more damage to the ozone than any spray can! Maybe you outta be more “liberal” with some mints.

Lenny has reached his limit.

LENNY
Oh yeah.

ROY
Yeah.

LENNY
Yeah well...

Lenny opens his mouth as wide as possible and like a dragon gives a mighty exhale of breath right into Roy’s nose. Roy is disgusted.

LENNY (CONT’D)
Oh and don’t forget.

Lenny tops it off with three more giant exhales in a row. Roy thinks then fights back thumping and bumping his belly into Lenny. Like two prizefighter exchanging punches, they go back and forth with their physical exchange. First a breath then a belly bump over and over again.
Then much like sword fighters, the two take the fight up notch by dueling each other with their noses. The exchanges get faster while the grunts get louder.

Robber hears ordeal from master bedroom then peeps around corner to see. He’s in disbelief as he witnesses Lenny and Roy tip over on their side and begin spinning around while kicking. Fed up, much like a father would be at his disobedient children, the robber reprimands.

   NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
   Boiled Beef and Carrots!

Lenny and Roy immediately stop fighting and are confused.

   LENNY
   What?

   NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
   Boiled beef and carrots! That’s what Mother used to say when me and my brother would tear each other limb from limb.

   ROY
   I don’t get it?

   NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
   My daddy hated beef and he hated carrots.

   ROY
   Who hates beef?

   LENNY
   I hate beef.

   ROY
   Don’t tell me your a freak-a-tarian too.

   LENNY
   It’s Vegatarian ya cow killer!

   NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
   (interrupts quarrel)
   Then...one day! Mother took the beef...

Robber references Roy.

   NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
   (CONT’D)
   Took the carrots...

Robber references Lenny.
And boiled ‘em together, to make a wonderful Cockney dish where the flavors got a long real nice.

Both men sit silent and confused.

So just like me and my brother had to...

Robber grabs both by earlobe and pulls them back up. Lenny and Roy are in pain.

Ouch! Owe!!

...you both are gonna sit here and say something “nice” to each other. That’s boiled beef and carrots.

Both are silent.

Who’s goin’ first?

Aren’t you supposed to be robbin’ the place?

We got a volunteer!

How come he doesn’t have to go first?

Cause I’m askin’ real polite.

To make his point, robber pinches Lenny’s earlobe again.

Alright, alright! (thinks for moment) Livingston, I’ve always been jealous of your grass.

Roy is amazed at what he’s hearing.
ROY
(dumbfounded)
What?

LENNY
Your grass! It’s soft and real green and reminds me of when I was a kid.

ROY
You’re joking.

LENNY
(embarrassed)
Sometimes I even sneak out at night and walk around in my bare feet. Tickles my toes.

ROY
Well why didn’t you tell me?

LENNY
I don’t know I guess I just never thought...

ROY
(secretive)
It’s all in the chemicals. My secret blend of fertilizer, fungicide and pesticide does the trick.

Lenny is interested in Roy’s advice.

ROY (CONT’D)
And crabgrass. I blast it with a little pre-emergent herbicide. I call it “nuke’n the enemy!”

Roy chuckles at his joke, Lenny joins him. As laughter subsides it becomes Roy’s turn.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
Alright good, good. We’re gettin’ somewhere...

Robber looks at Roy while grabbing earlobe.

ROY
(in pain)
Ok, ok! (thinks) Parker, you got...great hair.

LENNY
Hair?
ROY
Yes hair! Great hair. I lost mine in high school and always envied guys like you. So thick and shiny...

LENNY
It’s my hair tonic.

Roy looks up in great interest. Robber continues to listen to their niceties.

LENNY (CONT’D)
All organic, all natural “vegan” hair tonic. The minerals and seaweed proteins absorb into the scalp and grows it fuller.

ROY
(slight joy)
Grows it?!

LENNY
Yeah! I’ll order you some on-line. Imported from Morocco.

ROY
Morocco?!

Both men begin to chuckle as if they’ve been friends for years.

LENNY
I’ll tell ya what, you show me how to fertilize my grass and I’ll show you how to fertilize your hair.

Both laugh and forget Robber is there.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
Ok. Ok! Alright already!

Both men finally stop.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER
(CONT’D)
Now that your best buds, It’s time to shush it up! Understand? Not a word.

Robber looks to Lenny who nods in agreement. He then looks to Roy who nods in agreement too.
NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBER (CONT’D)
No more fighting. No more stupid stuff.
I wanna hear the wind blow’n right through my ears. Got it?! Cause let me
tell ya both, the last thing I’m doin’ is leavn’ this place, with a splitting...

At that very moment a loud crash of breaking glass is heard. Both are surprised to see Robber now dazed and teetering on passing out. With a last gasp, Robber drops gun, collapses and is out cold. Glass is everywhere. Both look to see their Middle Eastern Neighbor holding remainder of vase he’d just crushed over Robber’s head.

LENNY
Oh my God.

ROY
Oh my God.

MIDDLE EASTERN MAN
Oh my God...

Lenny and Roy, try to collect themselves. Roy then notices what was used to knock-out Robber.

ROY (stunned)
...My Ronald Reagan Inaugural vase!

Lenny and neighbor are confused. Roy is in disbelief.

ROY (CONT’D)
He conked him with my Ronald Reagan Inaugural vase?!

LENNY (annoyed)
So?

ROY
So how ’bout a baseball bat or something. Not my Ronald Reagan Inaugural vase.

LENNY
Who cares?!

ROY
I care! That was a Q.V.C. Limited Edition. From their Greatest President’s Collection I might add.
LENNY
(sarcastic)
Greatest president?!

ROY
The greatest! You’ve just never experienced anything like Ronald Reagan.

LENNY
Oh I experienced him alright, and that astrology wacko wife of his.

ROY
Don’t you dare make fun of this country's finest First Lady!

LENNY
You mean “Just Say No” Nancy...

ROY
At least she cared about the kids.

Lenny and Roy have forgotten their new friendship. As they bicker, Middle Eastern again watches as if he’s viewing tennis. Then, from corner of his eye, Middle Eastern notices gun on the floor. He curiously picks it up and examines weapon.

Lenny and Roy continue to debate.

Holding gun, Middle Eastern slowly approaches the two still tied. He moves in on Lenny and Roy and intensely aims gun at Lenny. Men don’t notice he is there and continue to argue. Suddenly, while adamantly making a his point, Lenny gets dowsed with stream of water. Middle Eastern man then points gun at Roy soaking him with water too. It’s a SQUIRT GUN. The two are humiliated as Middle Eastern laughs in sheer delight.

MIDDLE EASTERN MAN
(very serious)
Squirt gun...cool beans!

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE ROY’S HOUSE – DAY

Siren on police cruiser is on as officer leads Neighborhood Robber, still with ski cap, to vehicle.

Lenny and Roy with Middle Eastern exit front door to warm welcome of the neighborhood.
Each of their wives leap into their arms and smother them with kisses. Another neighbor offer Middle Eastern some freshly baked American Flag cookies. Everyone cheers. The press takes photo of the three men. Lenny on left shaking Roy’s hand on right with Middle Easterner in middle extending arms. (NOTE: Shot is to replicate famous Bill Clinton Peace Handshake featuring Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat from 1993.)

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. LENNY’S GARAGE - NIGHT

In sneaky fashion, Lenny turns light on in garage then looks left and right making sure no one is watching.

INT. ROY’S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Also sneaky, Roy turns on light then looks out bathroom door left and right making sure no one is coming.

EXT. LENNY’S GARAGE - NIGHT

Lenny quietly pulls big LAWN FERTILIZER BAG from secret hiding place.

INT. ROY’S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Roy quietly pulls brown bag from secret hiding place. He looks around one last time then take VEGAN, ALL ORGANIC HAIR TONIC out.

EXT. LENNY’S YARD - NIGHT

Lenny pours fertilizer into a SPREADER.

INT. ROY’S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Roy pours hair tonic into hand.

EXT. LENNY’S YARD - NIGHT

Lenny, as if he’s pulling off a covert operation, joyfully begins to fertilize his yard.
INT. ROY’S BATHROOM - NIGHT
Roy, in almost flamboyant style, begins to fertilize his hair.

EXT. LENNY’S YARD - NIGHT
For the first time, Lenny is excited about his yard.

INT. ROY’S BATHROOM - NIGHT
For the first time in years, Roy’s excited about hair.

EXT. LENNY’S YARD - NIGHT
With great exuberance, Lenny spreads the fertilizer across yard. Suddenly, the spreader is caught and stopped by something in front of him. Confused, he curiously looks to discover spreader has been stopped by another RED SIGN someone’s again mysteriously placed in his yard. Anger builds as he yanks sign from the ground and looks toward Roy’s home.

INT. ROY’S BATHROOM - NIGHT
With hair sticking in all directions, Roy hears the scream of Lenny outside.

LENNY
(heard from outside)
Livingston. Livingston!

Realizing Lenny is outside and angry, Roy gives one last “maybe he did it, maybe he didn’t do it” expression then quickly turns lights off.

CUT TO:

BLACK AND CREDITS