

The Petition

By
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A Five-Minute Play

TIME: Now

CHARACTERS:

Any combination of sex or race.

JO Under 30, Oversees collection of the petition signatures.

PAT Younger than JOE, a volunteer who gathers signatures on the street.

LOCATION: At rise, JO is on stage at desk or table. PAT enters carrying a clipboard with many wrinkled pages and a pen attached hanging on a string. PAT appears worn out from spending the day accumulating signatures.

JO

Hey. You're the first one to check in. How'd it go?

PAT

My feet are killing me. (Opens water bottle and drinks from it.) Got blisters on my blisters.

JO

How many signatures did you get?

PAT

Not as many as I hoped. Even with the crutch.

JO

What crutch? I didn't know you needed a crutch.

PAT

Left it in the car. It's a prop. For sympathy.

JO

Clever! Did it work?

PAT

No.

JO
Maybe a wheelchair nexttime.

PAT
Definitely a wheelchair.

JO
So, what's the report?

PAT
My grandmother promised she'll sign it tomorrow. But not 'til I explain it to her.
In detail. She's like that.

JO
Yeah, old people have all that historical baggage. How many'd you get?

PAT
One.

JO
One?!

PAT
One more than none. Plus my Granny's. That'll be two.

JO
You're kidding. One in eight hours?

PAT
Feels like eight days. (Sips water.) Got plenty of "comments," I can tell you that.
Never been called a Nazi before.

JO
Don't let it get to you.

PAT
Naw. Called a Commie, too, so it all balanced out.

JO
Exactly. Okay. First day of the launch ... maybe we need to make some
adjustments. I don't think it's us. Can't be. It's *them*. You write 'em down? The
comments?

PAT
Yeah, sure. We're supposed to.

JO

The more feedback the better. Maybe it is us. Maybe we need to adjust the wording; you know, to accommodate their concerns.

PAT

To we get the answers we want?

JO

(Shrugs)

Do what you gotta do. So read me the comments.

PAT

“I’m a Democrat, I vote straight ticket.” Twenty. Twenty Democrats told me that.

JO

Yeah, well. What’re you going to do?

PAT

“I’m a Republican, I vote straight ticket.”

JO

Come on, people! Think for yourselves! What a bunch of sheep!

PAT

“My church says I’m not supposed to ...dot dot dot.” “My religion believes...”

JO

Oh, for God’s sake. We’re talking logic here, people.

PAT

Got lots of those. My rabbi says, my minister, priest, imam, whatever.

JO

Are there any independent thinkers out there? Did you break down the question? Explain the issue? The ramifications?

PAT

Of course I did.

JO

After we worked so hard to find middle ground, for a win-win solution. But, okay, what else? Go on.

PAT

“My union boss says they’ll handle it.” “I’m going to wait to hear what direction my union takes.” One guy says, “that’s why we pay our union dues.”

JO

This is depressing. Just sign the freakin' petition!

PAT

There's more. "My wife takes care of that stuff." Three of those.

JO

Whimp.

PAT

"My husband tells me how to vote." Three of those, too.

JO

Hey, there's equality for you. What else?

PAT

"I'll wait to see what Bill Maher says, what Greg Gutfeld says." Got a long list of celebrity names. Jon Stewart. Tucker Carlson. Dave Rubin. Or is it Dave Rogan? Joe Rogan? Is it Rubin? Rogan? There was some confusion there. Who *are* these people?

JO

What about the issue itself? The issue! Did you get feedback from anyone who actually heard of it? Cares about it? Is freakin' *curious*?

PAT

Yeah. One guy. The guy who signed.

JO

Alright, then! Brilliant. What'd he say?

PAT

He said it really made him think.

JO

See?! There we go. What'd he say?

PAT

(Flipping through pages on the clipboard)

Um, it's easier if read his comment.

JO

In particular. What'd he say? Go slow so we can analyze it.

PAT

I circled it. (Flips through the pages of comments until he finds it. Clears his throat.) He said, he said, “Catchy slogan. I read it on a bumper sticker.”

JO

(Slumps, covers his face in frustration.)

The End