

POSTER CHILDREN

A ten-minute comedy by
Nathan Selinger

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

BRIAN, 14.

PAULA, 15.

(After school. A high school health classroom, with various health-related posters on the walls. One poster shows a diagram of the male and female reproductive systems. PAULA, 15, is sitting at her desk, diligently writing on a sheet of poster board. BRIAN, 14, is standing behind her, staring at the poster of the female reproductive system and thinking very dirty thoughts.)

PAULA: Okay Brian, here's one: "If you drink and drive, you won't stay alive."

BRIAN: Lame.

PAULA: How about, "Alcoholism is an equal opportunity destroyer."

BRIAN: Even lamer.

PAULA: "Allow life to thrive, don't drink and drive."

BRIAN: You know, Paula, you're really bad at this.

PAULA: I'm trying the best I can! Why don't you come over here and come up with a slogan?

(Paula turns around, trying to hand Brian a marker. She sees that he has started touching the poster of the female reproductive system in an R-rated fashion.)

That's disgusting.

BRIAN: What's disgusting?

(Paula gets up, grabs Brian's hand, and tears it away from the poster.)

PAULA: You're disgusting. What if Mrs. Grantenhoppers came back and saw you?

BRIAN: C'mon, Paula, I'm just being a man. Sometimes, we men just have to be manly and release our manly instincts.

PAULA: Next time, release your "manly instincts" into a towel.

(Brian sighs, picks up a marker, and pulls up a chair next to Paula.)

BRIAN: Okay, enough messing around. We need to finish this thing. You've got to start coming up with ideas for a slogan.

PAULA: I've been coming up with slogans for the past ten minutes!

BRIAN: You've been coming up with crappy slogans. You need to start making good ones.

PAULA: You know what? No. I don't need to do anything more for this damn project. I let you spend the last thirty minutes releasing your manly instincts—now you can go do the work.

(Paula slams her marker down on the desk, takes a biology textbook out of her backpack, and starts flipping through the pages, making a point not to look at Brian.)

BRIAN: Gee, I'm sorry. It's not like anyone actually cares about this class.

PAULA: I care! I'm not going to get a B in Teenage Health Topics 101! Nobody doesn't get an A in this class. Well, maybe Maggie didn't.

(Upon hearing Maggie's name, Brian closes his eyes and lets out an exaggerated orgasmic moan.)

Oh my god, you are like a horny Bonobo.

BRIAN: A horny what?

PAULA: A Bonobo. It's a type of ape that has sex a lot; I just watched a *NOVA* episode about them. *(Abruptly stops herself.)* Why am I talking to you?

(Brian, who has begun eating a bag of Hot Cheetos, shrugs at Paula as if to say "I have no idea.")

(To herself:) None of this is my fault. My lazy ass partner just had to decide not to show up for the past three days –

BRIAN: (With a mouth full of Cheetos:) I was suspended! It wasn't my fault –

PAULA: Of course it was your fault! If you want to make an ass out of yourself at a pep assembly, then it's your own damn fault!

BRIAN: It was just a bit of fun! There was no reason for everyone to get so worked up about it.

PAULA: Of course there was! To be honest, I'm surprised you only got three days of in-school suspension for that...stunt.

BRIAN: How can you say that? I thought you were in favor of supporting the arts in our high school. Isn't that why you joined the Future Waitresses of America club?

PAULA: It's called the drama club.

BRIAN: I was just helping the dance team raise money for their trip!

PAULA: You were treating them like they were strippers at a nightclub, Brian! It was offensive to women!

BRIAN: They were dancing to "My Humps"! They wanted to be treated like strippers! Did you see some of the moves they were doing? Honestly, I was surprised I was the only one who started throwing a little cash!

PAULA: Maybe all the other guys are just a little better at controlling their manly instincts.

BRIAN: Hey, that should be the slogan for our project! "Control your manly instinct: Don't drive drunk." I know, I'm a genius. You don't have to thank me.

PAULA: That doesn't even make sense!

BRIAN: If you're not going to appreciate the ideas that I bring to this group, you can leave your stupid comments in your pocket.

PAULA: You know what? Just go away. I'm tired of your crap. You were a lot more helpful when you were staring at that reproductive system diagram. That's probably the closest you've ever been to having a girlfriend.

(Paula takes a marker and starts scribbling furiously on the piece of poster board. Brian pauses for a few seconds, trying to think of a good comeback. When he realizes he doesn't have anything to say, he walks away, takes out his phone, puts on a pair of headphones, and starts blaring hip hop music at a ridiculously loud volume.)

Turn that down! You're going to bust an eardrum!

BRIAN: *(Yelling:)* What? You want me to turn it up?

PAULA: TURN IT DOWN!

BRIAN: Oh, I get it. You want me to sing along.

(Brian begins rapping along with his music while doing an awful, suburban version of the Dougie in his chair.)

(Rapping:) My Dougie. My Dougie? My Dougie. My Dougie? My Dougie. My Dougie? My Dougie. She say she like my Dougie. I'm fresh! My Dougie. I'm fresh! My Dougie. I'm fresh! Flyer than a mo'fo.

(Paula attempts to continue working on her poster, but grows increasingly irritated by Brian's rapping.)

(Still Rapping:) Step up on the scene, super clean, with my Soulja shades. I see a lot of haters. They must be sippin' Haterade. Wipe me down clean, 'cause I'm rubbin' on my head. I'm fresh! I'm fly! You heard what I said!

(While Brian has been rapping, Paula has been getting angrier and angrier. Finally, she has had enough. She marches over to Brian, and rips his headphones off.)

PAULA: What is the matter with you?! Have you been genetically engineered to be as annoying as possible?!

BRIAN: Wow, Paula. Are you being a hater? 'Cause you sound a lot like a hater to me. Have you been sipping Haterade?

PAULA: Honestly, Brian, can you just pretend for five minutes, that you care about this assignment? PLEASE? You know, I don't want to be here either. I'm missing a violin lesson, just so I can stay after school and finish this damn poster—

BRIAN: Calm down, Paula. I know what your problem is. You're jealous of all my swag.

PAULA: Jealous of your swag? You have no swag! You can't have swag! You're not allowed to have swag! You live on a street called Apple Tree Lane in the quietest neighborhood of the most affluent suburb in all of Ohio! Your middle name is Angelica! Your dad is a microbiology professor, and your mom teaches cooking at the rec center! I don't care how loud you play your rap music, or what dance you do in your chair, you will never have swag! Do you understand? NEVER!

(They stare at each other for a few moments. Paula is still breathing heavily from her rant, while Brian doesn't seem to have batted an eyelash.)

BRIAN: Wow. You really have been sippin' Haterade.

PAULA: Look, just leave me alone, okay?

(Beat.)

BRIAN: You must really think I'm a dick.

PAULA: I don't think you're a dick, I know you're a dick.

BRIAN: I'm not a dick, Paula. I'm just not letting myself get so stressed out about a little poster. Really, if people are going to drive drunk, they're not going to stop just because they see a little poster in a health classroom. Really, why do we even need health class? It's not as if someone is going to see your brilliant poster about the dangers of drunk driving and suddenly decide that they're going to stop getting wasted. It's not as if anyone's going to start having safer sex after they see some teacher put a condom on a banana. Really, if stuff like this worked, we wouldn't have any problems in the world! You know, sometimes school just pisses me off. Maybe Maggie's better off now.

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