

THE DRAFT BOARD

A TEN MINUTE COMEDY DUET

By Geff Moyer

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SYNOPSIS: The time is March 24th, 1958, and two young, naïve Tennessee farm girls have fibbed to their parents about spending the night with each other in order to camp out in a park across the street from the Memphis draft board on the morning Elvis is being inducted into the Army. Suffering the unusual smells of the big city, not bringing enough food, and being illegally camped out in a public park in a "not so nice section of town," creates an anxiety neither of these girls have ever experienced. While they await the arrival of their teen idol, they discover things about each other that not only surprise them, but could also alter their lifelong friendship.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 WOMEN)

BETSY RAYE (f)A farm girl, age 14-16.

PENNY (f)A farm girl, age 14-16.

SETTING

A park across the street from the Draft Board in Memphis, Tennessee.

TIME: Dawn, March 24th, 1958

PROPS

- 2 sleeping bags
- Thermos
- Box of Corn Pops
- Camera (appropriate era)
- Binoculars

AT RISE:

Dawn. Birds chirping. Sun rising. The TWO GIRLS are in sleeping bags at the foot of a park bench.

BETSY RAYE: *(Stirs, then suddenly sits up.)* Oh my god! Penny! Penny, wake up. It's dawn. Wake up! *(SHE slips on a sweatshirt and tennis shoes.)*

PENNY: *(Slowly stirring.)* Huh?

BETSY RAYE: It's dawn! If we missed him I'll kill myself.

PENNY: What time is it?

BETSY RAYE: Dawn! It's gettin' light. *(Shaking PENNY.)* Git up!

PENNY: Okay, okay. Jeez! Where're my glasses? Where're my glasses?

BETSY RAYE: You put 'em in yer shoe last night.

PENNY: *(Gets glasses.)* Oh yeah.

BETSY RAYE: *(Looking through binoculars.)* It don't look like it's open yet.

PENNY: *(Lays back down.)* So we can sleep a little longer.

BETSY RAYE: *(Yanks PENNY's hair.)* Git up!

PENNY: OW! Okay, okay. Gimme some orange juice.

BETSY RAYE: *(Without looking from her binoculars SHE hands PENNY a thermos.)* I don't see any lights on in there yet.

PENNY: *(Drinks.)* Ooh, that's so good. I feel like I could spit cotton.

BETSY RAYE: It's the city air. Full of dust and crap. We been breathin' it in all night.

PENNY: Hope it don't make us sick.

BETSY RAYE: It's worth it!

PENNY: But what if we catch TB? Or black lung disease?

BETSY RAYE: We're not in a coal mine, Penny!

PENNY: Pro'bly both go home with lung cancer, gaggin' and coughin' up blood, our hair fallin' out and...

BETSY RAYE: Stop exaggerating! You're always exaggerating!

PENNY: I am not!

BETSY RAYE: You are too! 'Member when you had that ache in your foot? You thought you caught polio, and it was an ingrown toenail.

PENNY: It hurt.

BETSY RAYE: Make sure yer camera's ready.

PENNY: *(Looking around.)* My camera! My camera! I can't find...

BETSY RAYE: It's in yer other shoe.

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PENNY: Oh. Yeah.

BETSY RAYE: How many shots we got left?

PENNY: *(Squints at camera.)* Eight. I think.

BETSY RAYE: You think!?

PENNY: The number's so little...

BETSY RAYE: Lemme see!. *(Looks at camera.)* Nine. *(Returns camera to PENNY and goes back to watching building with binoculars.)* That gives us three in the car, three gettin' out of the car, three goin' into the building.

PENNY: Do we have anything left to eat?

BETSY RAYE: *(Hands PENNY a box.)* Corn Pops.

PENNY: Any jerky?

BETSY RAYE: We ate it all last night.

PENNY: *(SHE begins eating Corn Pops from the box, hesitates, sniffs the box, then the air.)* What's that smell?

BETSY RAYE: *(Sniffs.)* Some kind of factory, I guess.

PENNY: Smells like dead possums.

BETSY RAYE: Welcome to the big city.

PENNY: You think it smells like this every day?

BETSY RAYE: Prob'ly. Hey, hey!

PENNY: What!?

BETSY RAYE: A big tall Army fella is openin' the place up.

PENNY: I didn't think the Army ever closed.

BETSY RAYE: Shouldn't be long now.

PENNY: How do you know how long it's gonna be!? Nobody knows what time he's supposed to be here. It might not be until late this afternoon. We could be waitin' here all day.

BETSY RAYE: It's worth it.

PENNY: Our bus leaves at 2:45. If we miss it, we are dead!

BETSY RAYE: We won't miss it! Besides, my daddy said when he had to go into the Army, they made him show up at five-forty-five in the morning. Uncle Jackson had to be there at six-fifteen, and my cousin Garry at six-fifty.

PENNY: Don't the Army ever do anything ON the hour?

SFX: *Car driving up. Pointing, jumping up.*

PENNY: Oh my gracious! Looky there! Looky there! A yellow cab. I ain't never seen a real live yellow cab, 'cept in the movie pictures.

BETSY RAYE: Calm down! Yer actin' like a hick!

PENNY: *(Chuckles.)* 'Cause I am! So are you!

BETSY RAYE: I do not consider myself a hick. And you, Penny Irene Gibson, should not consider yo'self a hick teether. *(Chuckles.)* Even though your initials do spell "P-I-G!"

PENNY: You got no room to talk, Betsy Raye Aberdeen! B-R-A! 'Specially since you only bin wearin' one for a year.

BETSY RAYE: Two years!

PENNY: First year don't count! It was a trainer!

BETSY RAYE: Does too!

PENNY: I don't count my trainer year!

BETSY RAYE: Well, that's yer choice! I count mine!

Pause.

PENNY: Ya know, it looks like it could rain.

BETSY RAYE: God won't let it rain today.

PENNY: Well, if he does we could catch pneumonia.

BETSY RAYE: You ever been caught out in a rainstorm, Penny?

PENNY: Yeah.

BETSY RAYE: How many times?

PENNY: I don't know. Lots, I guess.

BETSY RAYE: You ever catch pneumonia?

PENNY: No.

BETSY RAYE: Just like you never had polio!

A pause.

PENNY: Ya sure we got the right day?

BETSY RAYE: The paper said today, March 24th!

Pause.

PENNY: Ya sure we got the right place?

BETSY RAYE: The Memphis Draft Board! There ain't no other Memphis Draft Board. What is wrong with you? *(Beat.)* Talk to me, Penny. You been actin' all funny ever since we got off the Greyhound.

PENNY: It's just that...

BETSY RAYE: What?

PENNY: Well, I... I... well... ifin I tell ya, you'll just git mad.

BETSY RAYE: I promise I won't.

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PENNY: Ya promise?

BETSY RAYE: I jist said I did, didn't I?

PENNY: *(A moment.)* I like Ricky Nelson better than Elvis. There! I've said it. It's out in the open. *(Pause.)* Why are ya lookin' at me like that?

BETSY RAYE: I am flabbergasted! How could you tell me that!? Today! When's he's leaving me for two whole years.

PENNY: You promised to not git mad!

BETSY RAYE: *HE'S LEAVING ME!!*

PENNY: It ain't like he's going to the moon.

BETSY RAYE: He's going to Germany. Might as well be the moon. You watch! He'll fall in love with some pig-tailed, big-boobed, yodelin' Heidi girl and never come back. I'll have lost him forever. And now you go and tell me you like Ricky Nelson better! That's just pain on top of pain, Penny!

PENNY: I'm sorry. It just... just happened. I didn't plan it, Betsy Raye. I didn't just wake up one mornin' and say, "I love Ricky Nelson."

BETSY RAYE: Then how come this Benedict Arnold act?

PENNY: *Lonesome Town.*

BETSY RAYE: What!?

PENNY: When I first heard Ricky sing *Lonesome Town*, I bawled my eyes out, Betsy Raye. I couldn't help it. I felt every word he sang. Like you did with *Teddy Bear*.

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