

# **TRUCK STOP INCIDENT**

## **By Jerry Rabushka**

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**CAST: one male or female**

Mom never cooked us Sunday dinner when we were growing up. Dad wouldn't let her.

"A real family eats out on Sunday evening," he'd say. So every Sunday at five, he'd pack us in the car and start driving, sometimes up to two hours – for dinner at a truck stop. When you're a kid – if you remember – dinner is shoving a hamburger in your mouth and dropping the top half of the bun on the floor, ketchup side down. And eating it anyway. Not in our family.

There were six of us – don't forget these were the days before the SUV and the full size van. It was a *car* – not a three story all-terrain four wheel drive sports vehicle designed to take you unscathed through three world wars plus enhance your love life – it was just a car. It had a moderate amount of air conditioning, and the radio only played "the country station." Dad, Mom, me, Georgia, Lynn, and **(with disgust)** Barry.

All I know is my father must have hated my mother to make her babysit four kids in a car on a weekly road trip.

"Are we there yet?"

"I have to go to the bathroom!"

And mom says, "No you don't, you just went."

Georgia could get pretty insistent. "I do too! You don't know if I have to or not!"

And *my* old favorite! "Mom, Barry's bothering me!"

**(as Mom)** "He's not bothering you!"

"He is too! He's bothering me because he exists!" I said that every week. He still exists, and he's still bothering me. **(to Barry, who apparently is in the audience)** Barry sit down! Sit down Barry, this is *my* monologue. We'll let you talk after everybody goes home.

**(explains)** Barry used to sing. He hates this story, so I tell it all the time. The louder Mom turned up the country station, the louder Barry got. It wasn't even the same song. In the front seat you heard Hank, Hank Junior, Tammy, George, Waylon, Willie, Patsy, and Loretta, and in the back you heard Barney, Tarzan, Sesame Street, Pocohantas, and Blue's Clues. It was never quiet at home. Either the TV was on, teaching Barry that drivel, or he was trying to sing it.

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**(to Barry)** “You were too, and you’re no better now!” **(to the crowd)** Now he dresses up in leather and sings Shania and Britney as a novelty act with the local community symphony orchestra. We wait for the Beethoven.

Anyway, on this particular day, we were going to a truck stop in a city called Oxphalia, Mississippi. It’s gone now. Oxpahlia, and the truck stop – after the “incident.”

Now, I’m not saying all truck stop waitresses don’t have any teeth. Not at all. That would be like saying everyone who shops at Wal-Mart is obese with an IQ of 39. You might think so when you go on a Saturday afternoon, but, then again, they do have a whole aisle devoted to toothpaste. I’ve never seen anyone buy it.

And, I’m not saying that all truckers are fat, ugly, listen to Waylon Jennings all day long, and have a 15 word vocabulary, 12 of which I can’t use here. Oh, we learned a lot at a truck stop. Some had a non smoking area, but we always had to sit in the cursing section.

**(as if answering someone in the audience)** Which 12? See me after the speech. **(to Barry)** Barry, don’t you dare! **(to the host)** Who let him in here?

**(sigh)** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Me, generalize? I don’t think so. Not everyone from Mississippi is an uncouth redneck bigot. But look. The waitress had no teeth. Well she used to, but it looked like they wound up in mom’s vegetables.

**(as Mom)** “This is not grilled eggplant!” Mom loved eggplant.

And Dad’s like, “Who orders grilled eggplant at a truck stop? Do you know how old that must be?”

And the waitress comes by, cracking gum, smoking a cig – I take showers, she can too. No such luck. “Honey, *those* teeth? Not mine! I lost ’em in a pot roast four years ago. But he’s right. We haven’t ordered any eggplant in five years. We just keep refrying it to kill the mold.”

By the time mom got it, it held approximately thirteen gallons of Crisco. Tasty, but very unhealthy.

Barry, of course, was oblivious to the teeth, the waitress, or the eggplant. He was singing “I Just Can’t Wait To Be King” from *The Lion King* at the very top of his lungs. He only remembered one line, which is odd, since these days he has memorized the entire book and lyrics from *Chicago*, *Les Miz*, and *Mama Mia*. At the time, he knew one line, which

he sang in countless melodic variations, none of which remotely resembled how the song was supposed to go.

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