

A Modest Proposal III

by

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Setting

An office.

Time

Now and then.

Cast

BEV - State Senator, Female, 20s-70s.
CAROL - State Senator, Female, 20s-70s.
LARRY - State Senator, Male, 30s-70s.

Synopsis

Two State Senators come up with an innovative, "out of the box" solution to addressing unwanted pregnancies in a state that has outlawed abortion.

Note

The title is borrowed from Jonathan Swift's satirical essay, "A Modest Proposal," in which he suggested eating children as a way to ease the famine crisis in Ireland. Similarly, this play is intended as satire.

(Lights up on three State Senators coming to the end of a meeting. They all have papers and pens...maybe there's a bottle of water or two, and a large binder.)

LARRY

Great! So, we're settled on building six more freeway rest-stops in the next year. I think that should pass our State Legislature with no problem. Now, I do have more item I'd like to bring up; namely, funding for Planned Parenthood.

BEV

What about it?

LARRY

Well, I'm a straight shooter, so I'm just going to shoot straight. There have been reports of them providing certain prescriptions and other advice to help women terminate their pregnancies, which is now illegal in our state thanks to the wisdom of the U.S. Supreme Court. Now, we could cut their funding more than we already have, but I'm thinking we just need to conduct some surprise raids to catch them in the act, so to speak. That way we can hit them with criminal charges and shut them down completely.

CAROL

Planned Parenthood provides a number of services to our communities completely unrelated to pregnancy.

LARRY

Well, so they say, but that's just a smoke-screen and we all know it. Now, I've been in touch with the State Police and--

BEV

I think I can stop you right there, Larry. We've actually worked out a better solution to unwanted pregnancies.

LARRY

You have? And what would that solution be, exactly?

CAROL

Mandatory vasectomies...

BEV

...for all males over the age of twelve...

CAROL

...however, those vasectomies can be reversed...

BEV

...with a signed, notarized permission slip from a woman of child-bearing age.

LARRY

Okay...wow. You had me going for a second there. You gals have the darnedest sense of humor--

BEV

All new state representatives and state senators begin their terms next week, and as luck would have it, for the first time in our state's history, the majority of our legislators will be women.

CAROL

So, we did some informal polling and support for the mandatory vasectomy initiative has been surprisingly high.

BEV

One hundred percent yeas and zero percent nays...from the women, at any rate. There's no point in polling the men because women are now the majority.

LARRY

You can't possibly be serious. Mandatory vasectomies for all men?

BEV

Well, we know how concerned men are with women trying to terminate unwanted pregnancies, so it's clearly the most logical solution.

CAROL

Just stop the pregnancies before they start.
*(holding up her fingers like
 scissors)*
 Snippety snip. Problem solved!

LARRY

But...no...what the...that's ridiculous! You think men are just going to stroll into a clinic to be vasectomized?

BEV

Is that actually a word...vasectomized?

CAROL

It's going to be.

BEV

We are aware that there may be some reluctance on behalf of some men to do the right for the sake of the community, but we already have a monitoring plan in place.

LARRY

Monitoring plan?

BEV

Just a little chip implant that authorities can scan to make sure men are in full compliance with the new protocol. My dog Boswell has one.

CAROL

So do my cats, Trixie and Lulubell!

BEV

We have a fun new name for the program too! Tell him, Carol!

CAROL

Snip and Chip! And we give each man a bag of potato chips after the procedure. Won't that be fun!

LARRY

Have you two lost your minds? Mandatory vasectomies? Snip and Chip?

BEV

Where's the problem? Like we said, if a woman wants to get pregnant, all she has to do is sign a very simple form, get it notarized, and the man can get his vasectomy reversed for breeding purposes.

CAROL

No muss, no fuss. Unwanted pregnancies totally gone!

BEV

It's an outpatient procedure...

CAROL

...absolutely free of charge...

BEV

...doesn't take much longer than donating blood...

CAROL

...and it's good for the community.

BEV

Done and dusted!

CAROL

And a bag of chips!

LARRY

I feel like I'm losing my mind...okay, I don't know how many ways I can say "no," but no. Just no.

CAROL

That's a little vague.

BEV

Very vague.

LARRY

It's just wrong! Can't you see that? You can't tell men what to do with their own bodies!

(as BEV and CAROL stare)

What I mean is...it isn't right! If a man wants to get a vasectomy, fine, that's his business. But if he doesn't want one...hang on...hoo boy...let me put it this way. It isn't fair to men!

BEV

Did he just say that?

CAROL

He just said that.

BEV

Larry, as a practicing attorney, I'm going to let you in on a little secret about the law. We're not supposed to say it out loud, but for your benefit, I'm going to say it out loud. The law is not about what's fair. It's not about truth. It's not about justice. It's not about right and wrong. It's about one thing and one thing only. What can you get away with? If you can get away with it, that makes it right.

CAROL

Amen. And since women will have a majority in our next Legislature, you can bet your sweet ass we'll get away with it.

LARRY

I see. Well, clearly, you have thought this out, and I'll give you credit for that, but you seem to be forgetting one thing, one very crucial thing.

BEV

Do tell. I'm a big fan of crucial things.

CAROL

Me too!

LARRY

If you ask most people who is the most important person in a courtroom, they'll say the judge. Or maybe the jury. Maybe even the defendant. But they're all wrong. The most important person in any courtroom is the bailiff--the guy with a gun on his hip. Judges and juries and legislators can pronounce whatever they want, but that's all meaningless unless you can back it up with lethal force. Sure, people like to dress it up with "laws" and putting judges in fancy robes and whatnot, but that's what it comes down to, the ability to impose your opinion on other people by sheer force.

BEV

That's valid.

CAROL

But what's your point?

LARRY

My point? My point is that most law enforcement personnel are male. And a bunch of men are not going to enforce any law that affects other men. You want to pass a mandatory vasectomy law? Go ahead! But you'll never be able to enforce it. Case closed!

BEV

Actually, no. Should we tell him?

CAROL

We should tell him.

LARRY

Tell me what?

BEV

We are well aware of the Bro Code--

CAROL

And the Blue Code--

BEV

And all the various codes that have traditionally given men a privileged existence in comparison to women.

CAROL

So, quite naturally, we wouldn't expect men to enforce any law that they didn't personally agree with--

BEV

--and we have taken that into consideration in terms of implementing mandatory vasectomies. Thank goodness for modern technology.

(CAROL opens the binder and puts it in front of LARRY.)

CAROL

Voilà!

LARRY

What the hell is this?

BEV

That is the Protoclone V1, one of the fine products offered by Clone Robotics in Poland. Combat ready and practically indestructible. It has over two hundred motions, thousands of myofibers, and five hundred sensors. We're going to start by ordering two dozen of them to see what kind of effect they'll have on noncompliance.

LARRY

Noncompliance?

CAROL

The law must be obeyed, Larry. By force, if necessary. To that end, the Protoclones will gently and humanely escort noncompliant males to vasectomy centers around the state. Should sedation be required, the Protoclones come equipped with the very latest in tranquilizer technology.

BEV

I hasten to add that even noncompliant men will still receive their bag of chips.

CAROL

That's only fair.

LARRY

This is insane.

CAROL

Not at all. We haven't even told you the additional benefits of vasectomizing men.

BEV

Studies have shown that lowering the sperm count and testosterone levels in males decreases their urges towards violence and confrontation.

CAROL

So, fewer rapes, fewer assault and batteries...

BEV

...less road rage; in fact, less dickishness in general.

CAROL

Ha! I see what you did there!

BEV

The end result of vasectomizing men will be a nicer, kinder, more civil society...

CAROL

...and no unwanted pregnancies! Bonus!

BEV

So, the only question remaining is this...have you had a vasectomy, Larry?

LARRY

What? Me? No!

BEV

Any plans to impregnate your wife or partner of your choice in the near future?

LARRY

No!

CAROL

Then we'd better sign you up before the rush.

(CAROL shoves a paper in front of LARRY, who stands up like there's a tarantula crawling towards him.)

LARRY

No! Absolutely not! I refuse! I'm not going to allow the government to tell me what--I don't care what law--

CAROL

The Protoclones do have your address, Larry.

(Sheer terror in his eyes, LARRY exits at speed.)

BEV

He's hysterical.

CAROL

Men get so wound up about the tiniest things.

BEV

Honestly, what do they have against making the world a better place?

CAROL

It's a mystery.

(BEV and CAROL gather up their papers and start to head off.)

BEV

You know, I'll bet Larry ends up thanking us.

CAROL

I'll bet he does.

BEV

I have to tell you, I've been down about the state of the world for a long time now...

CAROL

Yep. Things just seem to be getting worse and worse. Every day, there's more douchebags competing to out-douchebag one another.

BEV

But now, for the first time that I can remember, I actually feel a little bit of hope for humanity.

CAROL

Me too. And such a simple solution!

BEV

Right? This will be a truly momentous moment in human history, just like the Renaissance or putting people on the moon. In fact, maybe we should try and come up with a catchy slogan of some kind.

CAROL

Hmm...how about "That's one small snip for man..."

BEV

"...one giant snip for humanity!"

(BEV and CAROL high-five and exit.)

END OF PLAY.