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The NSA's Guide to Winning Friends and Influencing People

Or: What we've learned from watching you

A comedy in one act

By Don Zolidis

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One-Act Comedy
6-29 actors

Having trouble as the new kid in school? Unlucky in love? Feeling like everyone hates you? You're in luck! Now you can use the National Security Agency's techniques of wiretapping, code-breaking, and data mining to get ahead! There's no time like the present to embrace the surveillance state... because the surveillance state is already embracing you.

Cast of Characters

NSA AGENT 1 (TOM)
NSA AGENT 2 (GABRIELLE)
STUDENT 1
STUDENT 2
JOE
MOM
DAD
DAUGHTER
POPULAR GIRL
BRITTANY
GLEN
MILO
GALADRIEL
LOTHAR THE HALF-DWARVEN
FRED THE PUNGENT
CHARLIE
NINA
EMMA
MOM 2
DAD 2
TEENAGER
NALA
MORGAN
JIMMY
ANDREW
TAMMY
BAILEY
HAILEY *(can be played by a boy)*
AUSTYN

The NSA's Guide to Winning Friends and Influencing People was first performed at Terrell High School in Terrell, Texas, May 11-12, 2014. It was directed by Sheri Tuggle and the original cast was as follows:

NSA Agent 1 (Tom): Cody Hogan
NSA Agent 2 (Gabrielle): Tessa Tucker
STUDENT 1: Alvaro Gutierrez
STUDENT 2: Daniel King
JOE: Moses Sanchez, Jr.
MOM: Anna Valdez
DAD: Daniel King
DAUGHTER: Breanda Forman
POPULAR GIRL (ALICIA): Courtney Clauder
BRITTANY: Emily Voigt
GLEN: Moses Sanchez, Jr.
MILO: Daniel King
GALADRIEL: Gaubriella Drollinger
LOTHAR THE HALF-DWARVEN: Breanda Forman
FRED THE PUNGENT: Alvaro Gutierrez
CHARLIE: Moses Sanchez, Jr.
NINA: Courtney Clauder
EMMA: Emily Voigt
MOM 2: Emily Voigt
DAD 2: Alvaro Gutierrez
TEENAGER: Anna Valdez
NALA: Gaubriella Drollinger
MORGAN: Breanda Forman
JIMMY: Daniel King
ANDREW: Alvaro Gutierrez
TAMMY: Anna Valdez
BAILEY: Courtney Clauder
HAILEY: Moses Sanchez, Jr.
AUSTYN: Gaubriella Drollinger

How to play the NSA AGENTS: In a word, chipper. Think used car salesman. They love their jobs. They should have big winning smiles and wear smart clothes.

If you're not performing this play in the USA: Feel free to change the terms accordingly to your own nation's spy agency. Perhaps you are lucky and the concept of a secret government organization spying on every communication will seem alien in your land, in which case you can still make fun of the United States of America and call it the NSA. (I'm looking at you, Canada.) On the other hand, if you're in a repressive enough state where the authorities are likely not to have a sense of humor about this sort of play, then I would still make fun of America.

I like to think the USA exists in the sweet spot here, with a vast and ridiculous system of surveillance, but also unlikely to haul you away to a secret prison for making fun of it. If, in a few years, I have secretly disappeared, then I'll be quite disappointed to learn that I was wrong.

How to perform this play: A cast of six, doing quick costume changes, can perform this play. Or a different actor may appear in any role. Any size cast between 6 and 29 can work.

Cutting this play: If this play is running long, feel free to cut out one of the six major scenarios.

(Lights up.)

(The stage can be just about anything.)

(GABREILLE (NSA AGENT 1) enters, dressed in a suit and holding a briefcase. She looks fantastic.)

GABRIELLE

Greeting patriotic Americans! Now, if you're like me, you mistrust the news. And that's good. But there's been some hubbub lately about an organization known as the NSA.

(TOM, also dressed in a suit, enters briskly.)

TOM

What's that, Gabrielle?

GABRIELLE

Tom, the NSA doesn't exist, so don't worry about it.

TOM

But it's in all the papers.

GABRIELLE

Right! And we have a lot of whistle-blowers to thank for that. Well – NSA stands for National Security Administration.

TOM

They sound wonderful.

GABRIELLE

They are. They are wonderful. Security. Think about that word. We're like a big security blanket wrapping itself around America's throat and squeezing and squeezing until everyone is just as safe as can be.

TOM

Wow!

GABRIELLE

I know. But there has been some scuttlebutt lately, now… *normally* we wouldn't even address these rumors, but it's been reported, if you can trust *(air quotes)* "reporters" who are reporting *(air quotes)* "facts."

TOM

I don't!

GABRIELLE

That's why I like you. So it turns out that we here at the NSA have been listening to everyone's phone conversations, reading everyone's emails, planting secret recording devices in your computers, hiding inside your refrigerators, and planting video-recording devices in your showering devices.

TOM

Whoops.

GABRIELLE

Although – without that, how could we be sure there weren't terrorists hiding in your bathroom?

TOM

We'd never know. And that fear would be terrible.

GABRIELLE

Exactly. Now, certain media outlets have portrayed our all-consuming desire to record everything as slightly "unconstitutional."

TOM

What!

GABRIELLE

I know.

TOM

I'm shocked! Let's find that constitution and rip it up!

GABRIELLE

Now Tom – we're not supposed to do that anymore.

TOM

Oh.

GABRIELLE

So, in order to repair our image in the public we here at the NSA are willing to give you a free service.

TOM

You didn't even know you signed up for it.

GABRIELLE

But you did.

TOM

So what is this free service, Gabrielle?

GABRIELLE

I'm glad you asked that Tom. I really am.

TOM

Thank you. I try.

GABRIELLE

And I appreciate your trying. Now, since we've been helpfully observing all human behavior since the Patriot Act, we've become experts in human nature.

TOM

We have?

GABRIELLE

Some of us have. In fact, we've learned a lot from watching you. And we've learned that you're doing things very, very wrong.

TOM

You should be ashamed.
(To GABRIELLE)
Which ones of them should be ashamed?
(GABRIELLE takes out an Ipad or something similar.)

GABRIELLE

I've got a list here.
(TOM looks at it.)

TOM

Oh.
(He points at someone in the audience.)
Oh. I see. Yes that is a problem.

GABRIELLE

And this girl.

TOM

Oh.
(She starts scrolling down the list)

GABRIELLE

Pretty much all of them.

TOM *(to the audience)*

Man. You people are terrible.

GABRIELLE

But don't worry! We're here to help you! How to Win Friends and Influence People – the NSA Way!

TOM

Yay!

GABRIELLE

Scenario number one. Let's say you're attending an All-American high school.

(An All-American High School. JOE enters.)

And you're new in town.

TOM

Problem – how do you make friends?

GABRIELLE

First let's see the wrong way.

(Other STUDENTS enter. JOE is a little crazed and strange.)

STUDENT 1

So I was telling Charlie the other day that –

STUDENT 2

Man if you say one more thing about Charlie I'm going to –

(JOE gets right in front of them.)

JOE

EXCUSE ME!!! I AM NEW HERE. WHICH OF YOUR FEMALES IS AVAILABLE!?

STUDENT 1

Dude, what are you –

JOE

I WILL BECOME THE NEW ALPHA MALE. LET US BEGIN PHYSICAL COMBAT.

(JOE begins strutting around like a peacock.)

TOM

Whoah, Time out! Time out!

(TOM steps in and takes JOE by the hand.)

Can I ask what you're doing there?

JOE

I watch a lot of nature programs. This is how the animals do it.

GABRIELLE

Well if there's one thing we know at the NSA, it's how humans interact in communal spaces. Because we've got video cameras in all of them.

TOM

So let's try this again – the NSA way.

(The two STUDENTS reverse positions and begin the scene again.)

STUDENT 1

So I was telling Charlie the other day –

STUDENT 2

Man if you say one more thing about Charlie I'm going to lose it.

(JOE is there, observing.)

STUDENT 1

So anyway – he –

(STUDENT 1 realizes that JOE is observing him.)

Uhh… I'm sorry this is a private conversation.

JOE

Of course it is. Go on. Just pretend I'm not here.

STUDENT 1

Right, so… um… I told Charlie that he was totally going to get that job and –

JOE

Oh I don't think so.

STUDENT 1

I'm sorry what?

JOE

Charlie Tremaine? 6 foot 3? Two hundred forty-three pounds? His mother calls him Pookie? Sleeps with two stuffed animals at night? Secretly wants to be a circus clown?

STUDENT 2

That sounds like him. Except for the clown stuff.

JOE

Yeah, he keeps that wish bottled up. But he practices his routine at night in front of a mirror and has a clown nose hidden under his pillow.

STUDENT 2

How do you know all this?

JOE

I can't tell you that, but I can tell you that you're safer because I do know it. Think about it, friends, you go to sleep at night in your little houses and who's out there making sure that the people who want to be clowns can't realize their dreams? Me. I'm the shadow.

STUDENT 1

Wow. Um… you're all right. What's your name?

JOE

My name is of no importance. You can call me… a friend.

STUDENT 2

All right.

STUDENT 1

Hey I'm thinking about having a party Saturday night, you wanna come?

JOE

No way. Your parents say they're planning a trip to Florida, but in reality they're going to drive twenty miles out of town and wait there for three hours before returning at eleven o'clock in order to catch you.

STUDENT 1

What?

JOE

Yeah, your parents don't trust you at all. Which is a shame. What do we have in this country if not trust?

STUDENT 2

Exactly.

STUDENT 1

Man it's not like I'm running around behind their back throwing parties!

STUDENT 2

That's actually what you are doing.

STUDENT 1

Right. But it's not cool of them to call me on it. You know what, new guy? You're our friend now.

STUDENT 2

Absolutely.

JOE

And I promise I won't say anything about how you kissed Charlie's girlfriend.

(They exit.)

TOM

Wow! Total surveillance sure is helpful!

GABRIELLE

Exactly. And – there were zero terrorist attacks during that segment.

TOM

The NSA is keeping me safe right now. Like a great big mama bird, chewing up the truth in a mushy paste and spitting it into my mouth so I can digest it.

GABRIELLE

Yup. Let's check out another scenario. Let's say you're a girl.

TOM

Cool.

GABRIELLE

Not you specifically Tom.

TOM

Oh.

GABRIELLE

And you're hearing a lot of guff from your parents.

TOM

Man I hate it when they give me guff. What's guff?

GABRIELLE

It's an old person term. Like MySpace or Facebook. Let's watch.

(MOM and DAD and DAUGHTER enter. She's dressed for a party.)

MOM

No. No. No. No. No.

DAUGHTER

What is wrong with this outfit?

MOM

No. NOOOOOOOO. No.

DAUGHTER

This is what everyone else is wearing.

Skipping Forward

MOM

Dear God, what is it?

DAUGHTER

This is from your match.com profile before I was born!

MOM

It burns my eyes!

(DAUGHTER pulls out an Ipad.)

DAUGHTER

And Mom – here are the photos I retrieved off your canceled facebook account!

MOM

What! I deleted those!

DAUGHTER

Oh yes. Sure. You deleted the photos. And once you delete a photo on facebook they delete it and it will never surface again.

MOM

That's what they told me –

DAUGHTER

Lies! Behold! This is your throwback Thursday pic from 1988 –

MOM

Make it stop!

DAUGHTER

Look at it! Look at it!

MOM

Noooooo. I was young. It was eighties. No one knew anything about tasteful clothing!

DAD

Hey can I see those pictures?

DAUGHTER

Sure, Dad. See them and weep.

(DAD looks at the Ipad.)

DAD

Oh honey. Honey no.

MOM

I'm so embarrassed.

DAUGHTER

By the way, I'll take the keys to the car now.

DAD

Please take them. Just remove this from our sight.

(DAUGHTER takes back the Ipad.)

DAUGHTER

I'll be home at two.

(She leaves.)

(MOM and DAD hug each other.)

DAD

You had terrible taste.

MOM

I know. So did you.

DAD

Yes.

(Lights change.)

GABRIELLE

Now with the NSA's massive database, you can make sure to call your parents on all the lies they've been telling you about their high school careers.

TOM

So the NSA has a database that records everything?

GABRIELLE

Oh sure. We keep it in a gigantic warehouse in Utah – the size of Utah.

TOM

What about all the people who live in Utah?

GABRIELLE

We secretly moved them to Nevada years ago. They didn't notice.

TOM

Well this is sure wonderful. But what about love?

GABRIELLE

What about it?

TOM

Well – how do you find it?

GABRIELLE

I'm glad you asked. I'm glad to report the NSA can help you with everything. Let's explore options with the prom.

(ALICIA enters with BRITTANY.)

ALICIA

So I think Glenn's gonna ask me.

BRITTANY

OMG he is so cute, Alicia! He is so cute! I love him! I mean I don't love him love him – but if I was cool like you were I would love him. Almost.

ALICIA

Brittany, you need to be quiet.

BRITTANY

Thank you. I will.

ALICIA

Glenn is mine.

BRITTANY

Yes. Yes he is.

(GLENN enters.)

ALICIA

There he is. Now be quiet.

BRITTANY *(quietly, underneath as she begins to hyperventilate)*

OMG, OMG, OMG, OMG

ALICIA

Brittany, you're doing it again.

BRITTANY

Sorry I don't have good impulse control.

ALICIA

Here he comes. Move back two steps.

(BRITTANY moves back two steps, still shaking a little, as GLENN walks suavely over to ALICIA.)

GLENN

Ssup.

ALICIA *(aloof, yet still madly in love with him)*

Hi.

GLENN *(still suave)*

Cool.

ALICIA *(trying to keep it together)*

Yes.

GLENN

So… I was thinking…

ALICIA

Yes?

GLENN

That maybe you and me could –
(BRITTANY leaps in and seizes GLEN.)

BRITTANY

YES I WOULD LOVE TO GO TO PROM THIS IS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE! AAAAAH! AAAAAAH!

GABRIELLE

Freeze!
(BRITTANY freezes mid freak-out.)

TOM

What was wrong with that? That's how I imagine I'll get all my girlfriends.

GABRIELLE

Keep dreaming, Tom.

TOM

Thank you, I will.
(TOM dreams.)

GABRIELLE

There was plenty wrong with that. Now let's try it again the NSA way.
(The actors rewind.)

ALICIA

Here he comes. Move back two steps.

(BRITTANY moves back two steps as GLENN suavely approaches ALICIA in the exact same manner he did before.)

GLENN

Ssup.

ALICIA *(exactly the same as before)*

Hi.

GLENN

Cool.

ALICIA

Yes.

(BRITTANY approaches.)

BRITTANY

Hey Glenn.

GLENN *(a little confused)*

Ssup?

ALICIA

Um… Brittany – don't you have to be standing over there right now?

BRITTANY

Oh sure. Yeah, I will stand over there in just a minute since you probably want to be alone to execute your schemes.

GLENN

Schemes?

BRITTANY

She hasn't told you? Of course she probably wouldn't.

ALICIA

I don't have any schemes!

BRITTANY

You're right. Sure. Of course. There's probably some other reason you spent four hours yesterday browsing through galleries of wedding dresses on your phone.

ALICIA

What?

GLENN

Huh?

BRITTANY

Actually, here's a printout of Alicia's web searches in the past three weeks. Let's see – best weddings, bridesmaid dresses, color schemes – ooh look she spent seven hours on a site called "making sure your groom doesn't have any say in the wedding plans."

GLENN

I wouldn't even want to have any say in the wedding plans!

ALICIA

This is all a big misunderstanding – really – I can explain –

BRITTANY

Hey check out the e-books she's been reading.

GLENN

This is sick!

ALICIA

It's not as bad as you think! I'm just being prepared!

GLENN

Well –

BRITTANY

Ooh here's one called, "planning for a big family."

GLENN

AHH! No! No!

(GLENN stumbles away, horrified.)

BRITTANY

Oh hey I'm single and I don't have goals.

GLENN

Okay let's go to the prom.

(GLENN runs. ALICIA stares at BRITTANY.)

BRITTANY

You didn't want go with him anyway. You should see what he's been reading.

(ALICIA stomps off.)

TOM

Disaster averted.

GABRIELLE

Kind of.

TOM

You know what I want to know? How to become popular.

GABRIELLE

No problem! First, let's say you're a dorky loser guy.

(Lights up on MILO. He's dressed exactly the same as TOM.)

MILO

Hello.

TOM

I don't like this.

GABRIELLE

So if you're a dorky loser guy, what do you do on weekends?

MILO

Well, I guess I'll just sit here and my computer playing World of Warcraft again. In real life, I'm a slender, unathletic nerd with body odor issues, but in the world of Warcraft… I'm a powerful elven sorceress named Galadriel.

(GALADRIEL enters. She's awesome.)

TOM

Uh… that's funny… ha ha. Hey how do you know my character's name?

GABRIELLE

Shhh….

(LOTHAR, dressed like a warrior, and FRED, kind of dressed like a warrior, enter.)

LOTHAR

Greetings! I am Lothar the Half-Dwarven!

FRED

And I am Fred the Pungent!

(He raises his weapon high and the others back away from him slightly.)

LOTHAR

Lead us Galadriel!

FRED

Yeah, what are we doing?

LOTHAR

I, Lothar the Half-Dwarven am ready to follow you into the nightmare cave of Lokesh the mad lich of Dorango!

GALADRIEL

I'm glad about that, Lothar the Half-Dwarven.

LOTHAR

Also, can I have your phone number in real life?

GALADRIEL

I'm a dude.

LOTHAR

Dang it.

FRED

You know what we should do before we go into the cave of what's-his-face? We should do some terrorist stuff. That would be fun, right? Anyone? Anyone for terrorism? Okay cool.

GABRIELLE

We have numerous NSA agents secretly infiltrating online games. They're impossible to detect. But, if we just let poor Milo sit here all night alone he'd investigate the cave or whatever, and he would continue to be sad and alone.

MILO

I'm actually having a great time.

GABRIELLE

You don't need to lie.

MILO

No, really –

GABRIELLE

But here's where the magic of the NSA comes in. What if, instead of playing silly games, Milo was able to turn on the webcams of a few his classmates? Wouldn't that be cool?

MILO

Ooh neat.

GABRIELLE

That way he can make friends without leaving the privacy of his own home! And there's nothing we here at the NSA we value more highly than privacy.

MILO

Let's see what Charlie's up to.

(Lights up suddenly on CHARLIE, who is in the middle of a particularly embarrassing series of dance moves set to a song like Miley Cyrus' "Wrecking Ball.")

CHARLIE *(singing at the top of his lungs while dancing)*
I CAME IN LIKE A WRECKING BALL
I NEVER HIT SO HARD IN LOVE
ALL I WANTED WAS TO BREAK YOUR WALLS

MILO
Hey!

CHARLIE
AAAAAAH!

MILO
Hey it's me Milo from school.

CHARLIE
I don't even know you man!

MILO
Well I thought we could be friends.

CHARLIE
Yeah sure I guess.

MILO
Awesome! Let's make more friends!

(Lights up on NINA, who is taking off makeup in her pajamas.)

Hey there!

NINA
AAAAAAAAAH!

MILO
It's me Milo from school.

CHARLIE *(waving)*
And Charlie.

NINA
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY COMPUTER?!

MILO
Making friends.

CHARLIE

You can be our friend too!

NINA

Okay I guess –

MILO

Taking off makeup, huh?

NINA

Yeah, um…

MILO

Cool. Cool.

CHARLIE

I appreciate your natural beauty.

MILO

I prefer you the other way. Put it back on.

NINA

Guys this is just really weird.

MILO

I know. You wanna meet somebody else?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

NINA

Okay.

(Lights up suddenly on EMMA, who is asleep in her room.)

MILO

Shhh.,. she's sleeping.

NINA

Don't get too loud guys. Let's just watch.

CHARLIE

She's so peaceful. Like a little angel.

MILO

I'm so glad I could share this with you guys.

Skipping Forward

MOM 2

Would you like some milk?

(the slightest nod from TEENAGER.)

Was that a nod?

DAD 2

I'm not sure that was a nod.

MOM 2

I can't say for certain if that was a nod.

DAD 2

I don't think she did. I think it was a twitch.

MOM 2

Did you nod, honey? When I asked if you wanted milk did you nod? Nod if you nodded before, okay?

(They watch like hawks. No response.)

DAD 2

See I don't think she nodded before.

MOM 2

I think you're right. Sweetie, would you rather have water for dinner?

(slight head shake.)

DAD 2

That was a definite no.

MOM 2

Right.

DAD 2

I'm so glad we're communicating!

MOM 2

We did a good job!

(MOM 2 and DAD 2 hug.)

So how about soda?

GABRIELLE

I can't watch anymore.

TOM

Man, those old people just don't get it.

GABRIELLE

Right. But let's imagine this scene again – but this time the parents are equipped the NSA way.

MOM 2

Honey, time for dinner!

DAD 2

I'm sure it's going to be delicious because your mother made it and she puts a lot of care and love into our meals!

MOM 2

I sure do!

DAD 2

That's what I love about you.

MOM 2

And I love that you love things about me.

(TEENAGER enters, hooked into headphones and texting, just as before.)

Hi sweetheart! How was your day?

(No response.)

DAD 2

What did you learn about today?

(No response.)

MOM 2

Sweetie?

(short pause.)

All right I think it's time to use the device.

(DAD 2 takes out "the device." This could really be anything from a black cube to a remote control to anything you want. Dad presses a button.)

(TEENAGER looks up instantly.)

TEENAGER

What the heck, my phone just died!

MOM 2

Hi Honey.

TEENAGER

Do you know if the wi-fi is still working?

DAD 2

I'm afraid we've incapacitated the internet for the moment.

TEENAGER

What? You mean the wi-fi is down?

MOM 2

Oh no. We've cancelled the internet. Worldwide.

TEENAGER

You've cancelled the entire internet!?

DAD 2

Believe me, we hold limitless power.

MOM 2

This way we can talk.

TEENAGER

Why couldn't you just turn off the wi-fi? You cancelled everyone's internet?

DAD 2

Honey, if we've learned anything from the NSA, it's that overkill is a good first step.

TEENAGER

You're demented!

DAD 2

I prefer misunderstood.

MOM 2

Now… let's talk. How was your day? And we want details!

TEENAGER

Well… I'm glad you asked. Uh… my day began ordinarily enough. My usual routine. I got out of bed and discovered I had an itch, which would the first of many irritations throughout the day. I thought about using my finger to scratch the itch, as I had a bit of a rough nail left over from the night before. However, I discovered that the edge of my math book provided just the right point for scratching, so I used that instead. After two or three seconds of vigorous scratching I could again concentrate on my day. Upon looking into the mirror, however, I discovered yet another tragedy in the making: a pimple. One of those big juicy red ones. With just the slightest hint of pus emerging from its summit. The way I saw it, I had three choices. I could live with it, I could apply a cream to it – I had several brands – or I could attempt to pop it with my fingers. I couldn't very well leave it alone, as Bobby Henson is in my second period class, and I am desperately in love with him. The cream might reduce its unsightliness, but it wouldn't probably wouldn't take full effect until fourth period at least. That left the third option. Squeezing the pimple until it burst. So, taking my thumb and forefinger –

DAD 2

Okay I'm turning the internet back on.

(DAD 2 presses the device. Everything comes back on.)

MOM 2

Nice talking to you honey.

(TEENAGER has gone back to texting. She nods ever so slightly.)

Ooh I think she nodded.

(Lights change.)

GABRIELLE

Remember parents out there: There's a good reason you shouldn't communicate with your children.

TOM

Ha ha ha. Good point. But I don't really care about old people. How else can the NSA help me?

GABRIELLE

I'm glad you asked! And, actually, since we have a detailed profile of your personality on file, I knew you were going to ask that question.

TOM

You did?

GABRIELLE

Yep – we know oh so much about you, Tom. We know you better than you know yourself. In fact, there's a ninety-five percent chance that you're going to cry in the next two minutes.

TOM

What?

GABRIELLE

It's what narcissistic people do when they learn the world doesn't revolve around them.

TOM

The world doesn't revolve around me?

(TOM starts to cry.)

GABRIELLE

See? But let's take a look at this scenario. If you can focus on other humans.

TOM

I have a hard time listening to others. I don't find them important.

GABRIELLE

Try anyway.

(Lights shift. NALA, a geeky girl enters.)

NALA

So it's another great day at school to make some friends!

(MORGAN enters opposite.)

Hey Morgan! How are you doing?

(MORGAN looks down at NALA.)

MORGAN

Oh. Hi.

NALA

Sure is a cold day today, huh? Crazy! You'd think it would be warmer today, but no it's cold! Ha ha ha ha! So… um… are you have a party this weekend?

MORGAN

I say this as your friend: Don't come to my parties anymore.

(MORGAN leaves.)

(NALA waves goodbye.)

NALA

Okay. That was strange.

(JIMMY enters opposite.)

Oh hey Jimmy! What's going on?

(JIMMY looks at her with contempt.)

JIMMY

I'm sorry, what?

NALA

What's going on?

JIMMY

I thought that's what you said.

NALA

Right. I said that.

JIMMY

Yeah.

NALA

So what are you doing this weekend?

JIMMY

Why are you asking me questions?

NALA

I don't know. I just… well… I thought that maybe you might ask me to go to the movies or something –

JIMMY

Wow.

NALA

Wouldn't that be fun?

JIMMY

No.

(He leaves.)

(ANDREW enters on another part of the stage.)

NALA

Oh hi! Andrew! Hi! You remember me, right? Hi!

(She rushes over to him.)

ANDREW

How dare you show your face here? Begone foul woman!

(ANDREW sticks out his hand dramatically.)

NALA

That's some powerful acting you're doing Andrew. Are you practicing for a play or something?

ANDREW

I would rather have beetles chew out my eyes than observe you for one more second.

NALA

Okay. Well cool.

(ANDREW is walking away.)

Maybe we can have lunch together.

(He's gone.)

Or not.

GABRIELLE

Fear not, citizen!

(everyone looks at her.)

I kind of always wanted to say that.

NALA

Who are you guys?

GABRIELLE
We're the NSA, and we've been watching you for some time now.

NALA
Am I a terrorist or something?

GABRIELLE
Oh no. We watch everybody. Now – I want to fill you in on something: everyone hates you.

NALA
I'm just starting to figure that out.

GABRIELLE
That's because you're slow.

NALA
Is that why they hate me?

GABRIELLE
Not at all.

NALA
Why do they hate me? Is someone spreading a rumor about me or something?

GABRIELLE
Well – thanks to our vast, secret telephone monitoring system, it's easy as pie for you to find out. You see, we've been recording every phone call in America for years now, and thanks to our handy-dandy voice recognition software, you can listen in on all the phone calls that include key words you're searching for. We use it to listen in on terrorists.

NALA
What key words do you use to find terrorists?

GABRIELLE
Things they're interested in: Rutabaga, lawnmowers, and Justin Bieber.*
**(If Justin Bieber no longer resonates with your audience, change this to a current annoying teen pop star.)*

NALA
Makes sense.

GABRIELLE
So tonight – just listen in on the phone calls about you.

NALA

Awesome. I'll do it! Thanks NSA!

GABRIELLE

Also, if you'd like to inform on your parents we can send them to a Gulag.

NALA

I'll see what they offer me for allowance this week.

(GABRIELLE returns to TOM.)

TOM

Ooh this will be fun.

(NALA is in her room.)

NALA

Okay, enormous wiretapping system, do your stuff!

(Lights up on MORGAN and JIMMY, on the phone.)

MORGAN

Can you believe what Nala was doing today?

JIMMY

OMG. OMG.

MORGAN

I know, right?

JIMMY

I know. Like who does she think she is?

MORGAN

Right?

JIMMY

Right.

NALA

Come on – say what it is!

(ANDREW is on the phone, butting in.)

ANDREW

What's up, homies? Three way call, y'all.

JIMMY

Woop!

MORGAN

Bring it.

ANDREW

So what was going on with Nala today?

MORGAN

I know, right?

JIMMY

Right.

ANDREW

Like – does she have to be like that?

MORGAN

Exactly some people it's like OMG.

NALA

Come on! Say what it is!

JIMMY

Right?

ANDREW

I know, right?

MORGAN

Right.

JIMMY

I know, right?

MORGAN

What?

JIMMY

Right?

ANDREW

Did you say right?

MORGAN

Who said right?

ANDREW

I said right.

MORGAN

Right!

ANDREW

Gosh I hate her.

JIMMY

I know.

(Lights down on them.)

NALA

Hey NSA agents. I can't figure out what they don't like about me. Can I send them to a secret prison instead?

GABRIELLE

Are they terrorists?

NALA

Sure.

GABRIELLE

Good enough for us.

End of Excerpt.
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