

The Rally

A Protest Play

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Lights up. A young African American woman, TIA is sitting at a desk, filling out paperwork. MANDY, A frantic woman enters looking around. She is young, white and carries a baby in a Bjorn.

MANDY

I-- I'm here about the little boy ? My neighbor saw something on the news--

TIA

The little towhead?

MANDY

(Relieved.)

Yes. Jaime, James Abney. He's 3. About yea high- (indicates)

TIA

Oh--

MANDY

Is he here? Is he?

TIA

I need to ask you a few questions, OK?

MANDY

No, damn it. NOT OK! I was supposed to pick my son up three hours ago, but my ex never showed up, and then my neighbor, she says, "Mandy, you need to head down to the station. I just heard something on the radio--"

TIA

What's your name?

MANDY

Mandy. Mandy Abney.

TIA

Your husband. is Michael Beauregrad Abney.

MANDY

We ain't married. Anymore.

TIA

Your-- ex?-- Got picked up by the police.

MANDY

(Angry.)

Goddamn it. Goddamn it Mike! That sum'bitch only has Jaime on every other weekend-- he can't keep him self out of trouble for two days? Please where is my boy?

TIA

Tia reads from a report.

Michael Abney is currently in jail and awaiting arraignment. I don't suppose you'll be posting bail.

MANDY

He's a goddamn asshole. I hope he burns in hell.

TIA

Yeah. Drugs, robbery--and-- It says here you had a domestic disturbance, but you didn't press charges.

MANDY

The cops-- they kinda convinced me at the time, a husband can't rape his own wife.

TIA

Rape is serious.

MANDY

No shit. (She indicates the baby.) I'm a good momma.

TIA

How old is the baby?

MANDY

3 month. It ain't her fault.

TIA

I know.

MANDY

I NEVER woulda let Mike take Jaime nowheres, but the COURT says that motherfucker's got RIGHTS--

TIA

Yes.

I din't do nothing--

MANDY

Did you take this picture?

TIA

Tia shows mandy a picture of a cherubic child. He has a white hood on and is pushing it with his little hands.

No. I did not.

MANDY

But that is your son?

TIA

Yes.

MANDY

Your husband said--

TIA

Mike's my ex. Jesus.

MANDY

You haven't seen this before?

TIA

I-- (coming clean) No, I seen it. I told him, Mike, not to put that on him--

MANDY

Did you know there was a "Free Speech" rally downtown today?

TIA

Uh. Yeah. Mike says it's no worse than that Black Lives Matter shit. Stuff-- sorry.

MANDY

Why didn't you go?

TIA

I got a little baby! Who's supposed to take care of her?

MANDY

You stay home with her?

TIA

MANDY

I have to. Any job I get ain't gonna do shit to get my babies clothed and fed.

TIA

You on SNAP?

MANDY

What?

TIA

Sorry. None of my business.

MANDY

Please. I just wanna see my Jaime. Please--

TIA

Mike was at this "white pride parade."

MANDY

Lets call a spade a spade, right? He was at the KKK rally-- And I wouldn't gone. I ain't like that,

TIA

He dressed Jaime like (shows picture.) this. Mike was carrying him on his shoulders.

MANDY

Proud as punch to show off his klan baby.

TIA

That's what it looked like.

MANDY

Jaime is the sweetest child, you ever met-- There ain't no one he doesn't like. It ain't Jaime's fault his father's an idiot.

TIA

They're in the middle of this parade, you know? This khakis and polo rally. It's getting heated. These "Nationalists" are being met with resistance. At first it's just a couple of kids. Teens, brave as hell, standing there with their iPhones, videoing everything. Mike, he's getting mad, Wants the camera turned off.

MANDY

He'd lose his job if he got caught on camera.

TIA

Mike takes Jaime off his shoulders to mix it up with these kids, spoiling for a fight. He sets little Jaime down on the sidewalk and starts to argue with this video kid. And little Jaime. He wanders away. Like you do when you're three.

MANDY

He's a runner. Makes me frantic.

Mandy nods.

So he wanders away. And MIKE, he doesn't notice. He's too busy.

MANDY

I'm gonna kill him.

TIA

And Jaime, he's getting hot. He pulls off his little white hood. He walks a good way away from Mike and gets lost in the crowd.

MANDY

He's so tiny. He's small, for his age.

TIA

He starts to cry. Mrs Luella Waters, you know her, hon?

Mandy shakes her head.

She's a librarian here in town. Nice lady. Pillar of the community. She sees this little child, crying, lost. Her heart absolutely melts. She picks him up, cause that's what you do, right? She picks this baby right up.

MANDY

She found him? Oh my god. Oh thank god!.

TIA

Yeah. She found him.

MANDY

Please. I'm so, so sorry. Mike's a shitty dad, and this is gonna give me enough ammo to make sure he NEVER gets custody again--

TIA

Yeah.

MANDY

Look. Just-- I'm not-- I'm not like Mike. I'm ok with people, generally. I don't have anything personal against anyone. Not the blacks or the gays. I just try and keep to myself.

TIA

I see,

MANDY

Look. I'm-- I'm sorry. Please can I see Jaime? Please?

TIA

Do you watch the news, hon?

MANDY

No. Can't stand it. Fake, not fake, who even knows anymore.

TIA

Well. A car-- a car was turning into the street, where the protestors were, where the clergy were holding a prayer circle-- Mrs Waters was there you see, she had stopped praying when she saw this little 3 year old-- And this car. This car--

Tia takes a second.

MANDY

Please. This car?

TIA

This car was being driven by a young fella, loves our current president, loves momma and the USA, except he doesn't really love his momma, cause he once tried to strangle her. This young man is driving what you call a muscle car. This young man, he jumps the curb and hits Mrs Waters.

MANDY

Hits her?

TIA

Yes.

MANDY

With the car?

TIA

Yes.

MANDY

But-- but--- (The baby in the Bjorn starts to cry.) Jaime-- Jaime--

TIA

Was in her arms at the time.

A long beat.

MANDY

I need to see him.

TIA

Yes ma'am. Let me call a clerk to take you.

MANDY

Can you hold the baby?

She slowly unbuckles the straps and hands Tia the Bjorn. The baby is crying. She starts to exit.

Jaime. He's so sweet. He-- he--

TIA

Ma'am-- please. Wait for the clerk.

The baby cries harder. To the baby.

Shhh--- don't cry little baby. (sings.) Hush little baby, don't say a word, mamma's gonna buy you a mockingbird--

LIGHTS OUT.