

An excerpt from

**THE WHOLE SHEBANG** (from **HA!**)

a comedy in one act

by Rich Orloff

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*Place:* A college classroom.

*Time:* The present.

*Characters:* THE STUDENT, earnest, enthusiastic and anxious  
THE DEAN, wise, patient, experienced, balanced  
PROFESSOR A, skeptical, critical, cool  
PROFESSOR B, instinctual, passionate, warm  
A MAN, 40's, average, unexceptional, human  
A WOMAN, the man's wife, just as unexceptional

In this excerpt from the play, THE STUDENT has been defending his project (the creation of the heavens and the earth) to his DEAN and two PROFESSORS. His roommate was supposed to bring him two "typical" human beings as visual aids, but they haven't arrived yet. Then...

A MAN comes flying into the room, as if thrown in by someone else. A WOMAN follows quickly. Both are dressed for bed. They look around, quite bewildered about what's going on.

MAN

What the –

STUDENT

Oh, good. Just in time. I'm so glad you're finally here.

MAN

What the hell's going –

The Student pulls up a couple of chairs.

STUDENT

Make yourselves at home.

WOMAN

(frightened)

Where are we?

STUDENT

Just sit. You're late.

WOMAN

Late for what?

STUDENT

Relax. This won't take long... Please.

The humans look at each other and hesitantly sit down.

STUDENT (cont'd)

(to the Professors:)

I'd like to introduce two typical human beings: John and Mary Doe. They're not extraordinary in any way, which is exactly why I chose them. John and Mary live with their two children in Dayton, Ohio. John works as an urban planner, helping to prepare Dayton for the next century. Mary is a doctor, specializing in internal medicine.

Although their jobs show their dedication to their fellow humans, it is as parents that John and Mary feel their greatest responsibility. Their two children are sensitive and alive, and also excellent students.

John and Mary have many hobbies. Mary plays the dulcimer, and John recycles aluminum. I am proud to put the destiny of Earth in the hands of average people like these: John and Mary Doe.

MAN

We're not them.

STUDENT

You're not John and Mary Doe?

MAN

No, I'm John's brother, Harvey Doe, and this is my wife, Edna Doe.

WOMAN (EDNA)

Hi.

STUDENT

But I told my roommate to bring up –

EDNA

They're on vacation. We're house-sitting for them.

STUDENT

Really?

(to the Professors:)

See how caring the human being is?

EDNA

Well, John and Mary have cable. We don't.

MAN (HARVEY)

Uh, can I ask a question?

STUDENT

Yes?

HARVEY

Who the hell are you, and why are we here?

STUDENT

Well, since you asked, my roommate teleported through a warp in dimensional barriers to Dayton, Ohio, where he realigned your molecules into a pure energetic code. Then he teleported you here and, having analyzed your cellular structure and DNA, reatomized you into this dimension.

HARVEY

Yeah, I figured it was something like that.

EDNA

You don't hope to gain information so you can destroy our planet, do you?

STUDENT

Oh, no.

EDNA

'Cause we don't know a thing. Honest.

PROFESSOR A

(whispering to B:)

I believe them.

STUDENT

(to the humans:)

Don't worry. This is just what, in our dimension, is the equivalent of one of your universities. These are professors in my department, and I'm a student. You're just here as part of my project.

HARVEY

Oh, yeah? And what's your project?

STUDENT

I created the heavens and the earth.

It takes a moment for this to fully sink in on the humans.

HARVEY

Wait a second. Are you telling us that you're –

STUDENT

I am who I am.

EDNA

Sounds like him.

HARVEY

You mean to tell us that, like the entire universe is just like... a science fair project?

STUDENT

More or less.

HARVEY

Suddenly, I feel so cheap.

STUDENT

So if my professors could just ask you some questions, it would really help my grade.

HARVEY

I work my fingers to the bone, and all I am is part of some nerd's science project?!

EDNA

Harvey, please.

(whispering)

You'll go to Hell.

STUDENT

Oh, don't worry. Nothing you say here will be held against you.

HARVEY

Eh, I don't care. With my luck, I could give the Pope CPR and I'd still go to hell.

STUDENT

(beginning to have intelligent doubts about these folks; to the Professors:)  
Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.  
These aren't the ones I planned –

DEAN

But they are average human beings, aren't they?

STUDENT

I'm not sure they're as common as John and Mary.

EDNA

The other day my hair stylist called me one of the most common people she knew.

DEAN

Well, then.

STUDENT

I really don't think these people are in any condition to be questioned.

PROFESSOR A

That's too bad. I've got so many questions I'd like to ask them.

HARVEY

Go ahead. Waste your time.  
Ask about my life.

STUDENT

Actually, I think we've bothered them enough –

PROFESSOR B

I think this is a wonderful opportunity to gain some insight into the human condition.

STUDENT

But these aren't the ones I wanted to –

DEAN

Why don't you just sit and be quiet for awhile?

STUDENT

But I don't think you'll –

DEAN

*Very quiet.*

STUDENT

But if –

DEAN

*Sit.*

The Student sits.

DEAN

Now then, Harvey and Edna, why don't you tell us a little about yourselves?

EDNA

Not much to say. We're just people. Ordinary people.

PROFESSOR B

Harvey, what is your occupation?

HARVEY

You mean, what did I used to do, before a bunch of pea-brained assholes laid me off?

The Student sighs.

DEAN

Yes.

HARVEY

For fourteen years, I worked on an assembly line. I got up every morning, drove twenty miles and spent eight hours tightening nuts.

PROFESSOR A

Why were you laid off?

HARVEY

My entire division was replaced by a silicon chip.

PROFESSOR A

I see.

HARVEY

Apparently, sand can do my job better than I can.

PROFESSOR B

Have you tried to get help from your union?

HARVEY

Not yet. But I do plan to talk to my local union official, as soon as he's paroled.

EDNA

The guy was framed.

HARVEY

It's her brother.

EDNA

He was doing a friend a little favor. If the government hadn't wiretapped that prostitute, nobody would have ever known.

PROFESSOR A

Have you considered changing careers, Harvey?

HARVEY

Well, I've thought about becoming a truck driver, but amphetamines give me headaches.

PROFESSOR A

I see.

HARVEY

I do have an interview next week at the toxic waste dump. They tell me garbage is a growth industry.