

## GI JOE: PART ONE

CARSON stands CS, TYLER is on the mic.

TYLER (*voice over*)

This is G.I Joe. He is not in costume. Because G.I. Joe doesn't need a costume.

Standing next to him is a vigilante Cobra ninja who can kill anyone on the planet with just one punch.

G.I. Joe, please dispose of said Cobra villain.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, G.I. Joe.

CARSON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

When you think of a man: handsome, charming, good looking, probably works out all the time and eats things like "Muscle Milk," helps old ladies cross the street, tallish, dresses well, handsome, smiles a lot, knows the constellations by name, good looking, cute, probably doesn't kiss on the first date but will hold the door open for you – so, I don't know, how about a "thank you" every now and then when he does? – knows how to do manly things like fishing, hunting, fixing cars, and reads books by Ernest Hemingway – you're not thinking of a man. No, you're thinking of GI Joe.

GI Joe, do the thing.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

CARSON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

BRI appears.

TYLER

And ... I don't know – this is some stupid doll that chicks play with.  
GI Joe: Did you work out today?

CARSON

You know I did.

BRI

Excuse me – hi. Excuse me.

TYLER

Ugh ... what?

BRI

Yeah, hi. Um, I'm not just "some stupid doll that chicks play with."

CARSON

Sure you are. You literally serve no purpose to the cause.

BRI

What cause?

CARSON

The cause of making America safe and the children of Americans safer.

BRI

I'm a lifeguard.

TYLER & CARSON

Aww ... that's so adorable and cute. You're a wittle wifeguawd saving people from drowwwning ...

BRI

I'm sorry, but who are you?

CARSON

I'm GI Joe.

TYLER

That's GI Joe, sweetheart. He's a Real American Hero. He flies jets.  
GI Joe – show everyone your jet.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

CARSON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

BRI

That's not a real jet. There's not even a cockpit cover thing on it.

CARSON

Watch – it does this. (*He shows her*)

BRI

That’s what you bring to “the cause”? A broke-ass toy?

TYLER

GI Joe: Explain to the people why you are so darn important to the cause.

CARSON

When I shake hands, I use a firm handshake and look them in the eye.

BRI

So do I.

CARSON

I know the difference between a flat head and a Phillips.

BRI

You mean screwdrivers?

CARSON

I change my own oil.

BRI

That’s stupid – you can just pay someone like 30 bucks to do it.

CARSON

I can clean a gun in just under 1 minute.

BRI

How dirty are your guns getting?

TYLER

Look: GI Joe has been an American staple for half a century. He is the epitome of what it means to be a man in a society that continually tries to redefine gender roles based on the whims of some toy maker in Taiwan trying to sell the latest “Bedazzled, Singing, Dancing Bratz Dolls” or whatever to little girls who only want toys to compete with other girls who get toys.

GI Joe, kill that Cobra assassin right next to you.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

CARSON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

BRI

Excuse me, but I am not a bedazzled anything. I am the epitome of what it means to be a woman in a society that continues to move the goalposts. Little boys are constantly told that they can be all these super cool things like professional athletes, successful business men, world leaders, or war heroes.

Do you know that I've been around since *before* the Birth Control Pill? Do you know what little girls were told they could be before I was born? Homemakers. That's it. Maybe a few teachers here and there, I've even heard of one writing a novel, but that's it. I was the first example little girls had of a woman being anything from an astronaut to a race car driver to a politician. Before me, girls weren't allowed to think like that. Without dreams, people become robots, living soullessly through their droll lives harboring regrets and failed ambition. There has never been a successful society that didn't at least have a course for empowering women and their dreams and I give girls the freedom to dream. The freedom to dig within themselves and defy expectations from a male-dominated oligarchy and be who they want to be – society be damned. I am a real American hero to millions, spanning back decades.

A moment. Tyler & Carson laugh.

CARSON

That was hilarious.  
It's like you said that with a straight face.

TYLER

"If it wasn't for the Pill ..."  
You just said you could be an astronaut.

CARSON

You're a *lifeguard*.

BRI

Oh, and what do you do exactly?

CARSON

I fight Cobra Command

BRI

Who?

CARSON

Cobra Command. They're an international conglomerate of paramilitary personnel motivated by greed and power forming the world's largest terrorist organization.

BRI

That's not a real thing.

TYLER

Uh, yeah it is.

BRI

No, it isn't. Essentially, you're a creation of male Ego manifesting itself into a fake illusion of masculinity dressed in fatigues and driving around in imaginary vehicles that could never pose as a viable option in any real military strategy.

CARSON

...

...

Uh ... what?

BRI

You shoot lasers. No one shoots lasers. The laser gun hasn't even been invented and probably never will because it's stupid. I, on the other hand, have real careers – sure they may seem silly to some: girl scout, pet vet, zoo doctor, ice skater, lifeguard –

TYLER

– what the fuck is a zoo doctor?

CARSON

Your entire existence is based on whatever outfit you're wearing that day. Change your shoes and your dress and suddenly you're a college professor with nice hair. Grab a different purse and a blazer and suddenly you're selling homes in Malibu and essential oils to your old college friends. I, on the other hand, am emblematic of the hopes and dreams of a nation who had to fight for survival. A nation that continues to strive for excellence.

BRI

Your job doesn't exist.

*(To audience)*

Excuse me out there, raise your hand if you know anybody who's ever been in GI Joe.

*(She waits)*

Oh, nobody? That's weird.

CARSON *(to audience)*

Raise your hand if you know anyone who's ever been a realtor, or doctor, or lawyer, or teacher, or race car driver, or astronaut, or chef, or politician, or bus driver, or scientist, or a student of any kind *(he waits – hopefully people raise their hands)*.

BRI

See? You're a manifestation of man's need for bloodlust and the destruction of humanity, whereas I am the manifestation of humanity's hopes and possibilities – a concrete visual of what each and every one of us can actually attain. I'm more real than you'll ever be.

TYLER

GI Joe, kill that Cobra killer right next to you and show this broad what's what.

He doesn't.

BLACKOUT. END PLAY.

### **GI JOE: PART TWO**

TYLER is on the mic. JAKE stands on stage.

TYLER

This is GI Joe. He's a real American hero who fights for freedom wherever there's trouble. GI Joe is the epitome of the American dream in a time that needs the American dream now more than ever. When there's evil, GI Joe will take care of it. Because GI Joe is brave. GI Joe, take care of evil.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

GI Joe is the embodiment America: He's brave, honest, works hard, stays in shape, writes checks to tax deductible charity organizations, and helps old ladies cross the street where they will be safe and sound.

GI Joe, help an old lady cross the street to safety.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

Like all good, hard working citizens, GI Joe has a 401K, pension plan, and a retirement fund that is invested in high-yield mutual funds.

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

Except the Wall Street banks that handle GI Joe's investments, pension plan, and 401K invested them in junk bonds fleecing many veterans, union members, and entire municipalities out of all their investments, and their funds have all but disappeared.

JAKE

Wait, what –

TYLER

That's okay, though. Because the people involved with these highly criminal acts will never go to prison – because they're so rich!

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

... Fuck yeah, Tyler ...

TYLER

GI Joe has fought for freedom here at home and overseas. He has seen his fellow Joes fall and his reward for surviving is top-notch health care, multiple job opportunities based on his ability to lead, and a stipend so he could attend college.

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

Except, we've managed to to make practically zero progress overseas, our VA hospitals are over-crowded and under-managed, and many of the colleges who market to GI Joe and his fellow Joes are "diploma mills" leeching the federal government and our vets out of taxpayer-funded hopes at the expense of those who are willing to sacrifice their lives for our country.

JAKE

– what the fuck is a dipoloma mi –

TYLER

– But that's okay, because as long as our country is at war – somewhere – our major industries (like military-grade equipment manufacturing, and higher education) will see

(MORE)

TYLER (cont'd)

profits soar in the range of 400% annual increases.

GI Joe, help an old lady cross the street.

He does, but he doesn't like it.

JAKE

Okay, can we get back –

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

What?

TYLER

This is GI Joe –

JAKE

– Wait, I have some questions about the –

TYLER

-- GI Joe knows what it takes to survive when the chips are down.

Sure, there are a litany of things out of our control: A corrupt government that is bought and paid for by the super-wealthy, a xenophobic approach to humanity, and the rise of diseases that were once thought to be eradicated –

JAKE

– what diseases?! –

TYLER

– Like the measles, ebola, and now Zitka which has been detected in Texas and New York and has caused brain damage in 4,000 newborns in Brazil alone –

JAKE

– Man, that is some bullshit –

TYLER

But, that's okay because ...

– GI Joe, help an old lady cross the street.

He does not.

JAKE

Listen, that's enough –

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

No. No more fuck yeahs.

TYLER

This is GI Joe –

JAKE

– I don't wanna be GI Joe anymore.

TYLER

... You have to be GI Joe.

JAKE

Why? Why do I have to be GI Joe?

TYLER

Because you're GI Joe.

JAKE

Uh, well, being GI Joe kinda sucks.

TYLER

GI Joe is a real American hero who fights –

JAKE

– “fights for freedom wherever there's trouble” – yeah, I remember the song. The problem is, the trouble seems to be getting closer and closer to home. If I'm supposed to fight for freedom wherever there's trouble wouldn't that mean ... I should just start right here at home?

TYLER

...

JAKE

...

TYLER

...

...

... no, I don't think so. No.

JAKE

What happened here? I mean I left and everything was fine. Now look what you've done.

TYLER

It's not me.

JAKE

It is you. This is your world.

TYLER

Nah, I just live here.

JAKE

You're supposed to be the one who helps fight for freedom wherever there's trouble –

TYLER

– Yeah, but –

JAKE

– no buts, man. You were obsessed with me when you were growing up – you created me.

TYLER

– I didn't *create* –

JAKE

– you projected all these youthful ideals on me that were supposed to help mold you into a better human being, a better citizen, a brave man.  
And now look. All this shit is going on around you and what have you done?

TYLER

I just write plays, so –

JAKE

– Have you written plays that bring awareness to the possibilities that even common citizens can bring about change?

TYLER

Actually, I'm working on a full-length that explores how the military industrial –

JAKE

– Stop. Listening to playwrights explain their plays makes me want to jump into traffic. Come down here.

TYLER

Huh?

JAKE

Come down here.

TYLER

We're doing the –

JAKE

Get down here, Tyler. Right now.

He does. GI Joe puts  
his arms on Tyler's shoulders.

JAKE

You're not a kid anymore. You have a wife, a son, and another on the way. When are you going to step up and help make this a better world?

TYLER

I'm not a hero.

JAKE

Give me your arm.

GI Joe helps Tyler cross the street.

JAKE

It's time, Tyler. You need to be brave. There's trouble.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

JAKE

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

END PLAY.

### GI JOE: PART THREE

SHON stands CS. TYLER on the mic.

TYLER

This is GI Joe. He's a real American hero who fights for freedom wherever there's trouble. GI Joe is the epitome of the American dream in a time that needs the American dream more than ever. When there's evil, GI Joe will take care of it. Because GI Joe is brave. GI Joe, take care of evil.

Shon flexes his muscles.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

SHON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

Do you find yourself being scared, or intimidated by your inadequacies on a regular basis? Do you live in fear that, at any moment, people are going to realize you're a giant fraud? Well guess what? GI Joe is you. GI Joe is that part of you that Joe gives no fucks about what people think. GI Joe will fuck people up. GI Joe, show the room all the fucks you give.

SHON

No fucks.

He shows off his fucks.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

SHON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

GI Joe is that part of you that is brave, that bucks the system, that throws caution to the wind. Do you think GI Joe is concerned about seeming weak? GI Joe help a family of ducklings cross the street.

He does.

TYLER

Fuck yeah, GI Joe.

SHON

Fuck yeah, Tyler.

TYLER

GI Joe has something he would like to say to you. GI Joe has a message. And you better listen to GI Joe because GI Joe doesn't fuck around.

GI Joe, say what you have to say.

SHON (*in a spot*)

As many of you know, I've spent the better part of a decade in this building. When I first came here at 18, I didn't know anything. I didn't know where I was going, I didn't know what I wanted to do, I barely knew who I was. But I found a home in this building right here.

So, I just wanna say thank you.

Not just for the past three years, but for the past 20. And, for the next 20 because everything you all have done will have an impact on me. This is theater, goddamnit, and we're not in this alone. We all need each other to make what we do work. And that includes the audience.

Most importantly, thank you for helping me raise my son in a theater. If I can give him anything, I hope it's the feeling of home that a theater and theater artists provide for me.

Thank you, Kantner.

You've all made me a better artist, and a better person.

You are all GI Joe.