

A Story Told a Few Years From Now

by

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A Short Story written as a stage play.

Characters:

Our Hero

Joe

Harry

The Ex-In 2300®

A tough-ass hard-core military mother-fucker.

"The curtain" opens on a swanky, middle-class bar; on a Saturday night.

A Story Told a Few Years From Now

Our Hero (Hero): So, yeah, I had just got it. The Ex-In 2300[®]. Supposed to do anything, right? Well, I gotta say, yeah, it pretty much does. Everything. I was driving to my new job over at the air base, and, you know, I'm programming it - the voice activation thing. I got it to pick up a Google[®] map and it was prompting me, you know, like:

The Ex-In 2300 (Ex-in): Please say left.

Hero: Left. Then suddenly it says:

Ex-in: It appears that you are driving. Would you like me to enable GPS?

Hero: Supposed to do anything, right? Yes phone. Enable GPS.

Ex-in: Please say or type in destination.

Hero: Uncle Sam Air Force base.

Ex-in: Visitor's entrance. Please take a right at the next...

Hero: No...no. Cancel.

Ex-in: Disable GPS?

Hero: Ok, so it's not perfect. Anyway, so I ask again and it leads me to the service entrance, and I'm starting to get this, like, paranoid sensation, like it was trying to lead me *away* from the gate I needed.

Joe: What do you do there again?

Hero: Fuck off, Joe. I don't want to kill you.

Harry: Because if he told you, he'd have to.

Joe: That's so cheesy.

Hero: Fuck off Joe.

Joe: Some pretty deep shit.

Hero: We can keep it at that.

Joe: Proceed.

Hero: So I say to the phone, "No. Henderson gate."

Ex-in: Henderson gate cannot be found.

Hero: Hen-der-son.

Ex-in: Location found. On Browning Street, turn right. 100 meter blah blah blah.

Joe: So it picked it up?

Ex-in: Yeah, sorta. It took me by two other gates on purpose.

Joe (snidely): Or maybe you were being paranoid.

Hero: No man, check this out. I was just setting up the story.

Joe (mocking): This ain't anything you're gonna have to kill us, is it?

Hero: Consumer electronics, Joe. I can say whatever I damn-well want to about consumer electronics. Think about this. This is a phone, imagine what we can do at the lab?

Harry, having finished his beer, is looking to get another.

Harry: So, finish.

Hero: Right. So yeah, I drive around in a circle to get to Henderson gate, and I'm showing the guard my papers and the phone starts ringing. So I say, "answer" but it keeps on ringing. "Answer." And then on top of the ringing comes this voice:

Ex-in: Unrecognized command.

Hero: "An-ser!" Buggy fucker. The guard at the gate's laughing his ass off. Finally, I just turn it off.

Joe's drunken haze lifts a bit.

Joe: So you think it was ringing to get the attention of the guard?

Hero: Yeah and this is where it gets really fucked up. I had to tempt fate. I had to know beyond a reasonable doubt that my phone was spying on me. So I turned it back on.

Joe (responding to the tone): This doesn't sound good.

Hero: I've got a great story and I'm alive.

Harry is really desiring more booze.

Harry: Finish!

Hero: Yeah...So, I'm driving to the lab, up this sharp incline to the high point on the base. You can see that part from the street so you don't have to worry about me killing you. And the phone starts ringing again. So I drop the call this time. Actually it was an aide to General Covington. I learned that later.

Harry (perking up): At your formal inquiry.

Joe: You had a formal inquiry because you hung up on a general?

Hero: No, I had a formal inquiry because I caused a half-hour lockdown of the entire base. I got an ass-chewing 'cause I hung up on General Covington.

Joe remembers having once watched the news.

Joe: I saw that on the news. That was you?

Hero: Yeah. So I'm driving along, thinking maybe I was just paranoid, when suddenly one of my tires goes flat and I hear a "pop". I swerve and pull over and like, 15 seconds later, four guys in full BDU's and M16's at the ready surround my car. One of the guys knocks on my window.

The Military: GET OUT OF THE VEHICLE NOW!

Joe: What'er BDU's?

Harry: Fatigues. You know? Soldier clothes. Dumb-ass.

Hero: Thanks for the lesson, Harry. Anyway... Right, the story. Ok, this was pretty stupid. So I reach both my hands over to undo my seat belt.

Joe: Oh shit.

Hero: One of the guys fires two shots through my window, punches it through, and grabs my neck.

Joe (as a grunt): Whoa!

Hero: I'm like, "Officer, I'm innocent! Don't kill me! I'm a citizen!"

Joe (laughing): I'm a citizen?

Hero: Those actual words.

Joe: So what did they do?

Hero: They took me in but let me go after they saw my paperwork. I even got reimbursed for my window.

Joe: And the phone?

Hero: Fuckin' thing can do anything, right? Including bring down on me the full military might of the USA in an instant. It had contacted base security causing a full lockdown. Instantly, a security team was notified and was in the air in minutes. They used the GPS of the phone to locate me and ruin my day.

Harry: Isn't that like totally illegal?

Hero: Guess not for where I was headed.

Joe (enraptured): Did you have to get rid of your phone?

Hero: Nope. Got it right here. Voice command.

Ex-in: Beep.

Hero: Attack Joe.

Ex-in: Joe, you're a dumbass.

Joe: Ha.

Hero: No. Someone called someone to get someone to enable my phone on base. Took like half an hour.

Joe (stunned): Crazy.