

Bob's Beef Jerky
for Brie

(The stage lights come up on a woman chained to a vending machine with the large caption "Bob's Beef Jerky". She is holding note cards. A large padlock is draped across her chest.)

Giri

Today is the day I change the world. No longer am I willing to settle with just a vegetarian poster on my wall, eating healthy myself, or telling my friends. I'm going to tell everyone in the whole world! We're going to make everyone vegetarians! (Laughs maniacally) I'm going to stand here until the news comes, and the papers come, and I can convince America that I am right, and they are wrong.

(A man enters rifling through his pockets for change. He looks up and notices Giri blocking the change slot.)

Eric

Excuse me, but you've chained yourself to my future lunch. Could you move a little to the right so I can get the jerky out and then I'll be on my way and you can stay there.

Giri

(whips out a notecard) ehh-hem. Number three, for the hurried business executive who doesn't think he has time to become a vegetarian.

Eric

Excuse me?

Giri

You...

Eric

Me?

Giri

Yeah, you. The hurried business exec. who doesn't think he has time to become a vegetarian.

Eric

Who's talking about becoming a vegetarian? All I wanted was some beef jerky for lunch and now I'm going to be late for my meeting because you've chained yourself to the machine.

Giri

See, you've proven my point. Ok, business, I can do business too. I'll cut you a deal, you stay long enough for me to tell you why you should become a vegetarian, and I'll maybe get out of you way so that you can have some beef jerky.

Eric

You'll maybe get out of my way??!?!? I'll counter offer, I listen to your spiel, and you must get out of my way.

Giri

(hurriedly) We'll see. Ok, now, here are the reasons you should become a vegetarian. As you know, you are a hurried business executive with very little time. (She smiles knowingly at Eric) And since you have little time, you think that eating out of vending machines such as this one. (She gestures to the machine) is the only way to go. Guess again! An exciting alternative to this is Vegetarianism! Modern vegetarianism comes in many forms, first there are the vegans, who eat only....

Eric

(Cuts in) OK, OK, now how about the beef jerky?

Giri

I haven't finished yet!!! The deal was the whole speech for some beef jerky (under her breath maybe).

Eric

What did you say? Forget it, I'll go to the restaurant next door and treat myself to some Veal Parmesan.?

Giri

How could you possibly think of eating veal??

Eric

OK, no beef jerky, although I don't know why. WHY can't I eat veal?

Giri

Baby cows, separated from their mother at birth, fed a milk mixture that causes them to die at three weeks old, and while they're alive, they live in pens too small to move around in. never cleaned out. They get diseases, they suffer, they die, you eat them. Do you see anything wrong with this? Do YOU? I DO!!! DO YOU?!?!?

Eric

But the cows are put on earth to be eaten!!!

Giri

They're what???? Are you NUTS???

Eric

Look, If cows were not made to be eaten, why would god have made them?

Giri

If you weren't made to be eaten why would god have made you?

Eric

You're psycho, I'm calling the cops.

Giri

Wait! You promised!! You said if you listened to my speech I would give you some beef jerky. And you haven't listened to my speech, so I'm not giving you any beef jerky.

Eric

I said I would got to the restaurant and eat something else!

(Enter a newswoman with a camera. She is busy adjusting her hair and checking a hand mirror for her makeup. She looks bored and begins setting up the camera)

Maria

Here we are live at the scene of a sit-in in process. This woman, (Holds microphone up to Giri's face)

Giri

Giri Thomas. (Pulls out a note card) And I'm here today to tell everyone about the miracles of Vegetarianism. Vegetarianism. Vegetarianism is not just for the hippies and beatniks people have thought it was at first...

Maria

This woman, Giri Thomas, a rabid vegetarian, is holding this man here hostage. The suspect has chained herself to the Bob's Bee Jerky machine, and refuses to be unchained. More updates in a while from WSAM News. We're there when the news is happening.

Giri

I'm not holding him hostage!!!

Maria

You're hanging onto his tie and you won't let him go. What do YOU call that?

Giri

I said I'd let him go if he'd just listen to my reasons for why he should become vegetarian! And now for you the modern woman who puts in a full day at the office, then goes home and cooks Note card #8.

Eric

Could you get her off of me? I can't breathe!

Giri

If you'll just turn that camera on for a moment (looks at note card) and let me tell the world about the wonderful, healthful, cruelty free lifestyle that is vegetarianism! Then I'll let this man go. That's why I called you and told you that a woman was chaining herself to beef jerky machine in the basement of this building. So I could spread the message! That's why you came!!

Maria

It was a slow news day.

Giri

Don't say that! You don't mean that! You came to hear the WORD!

Maria

(to Eric) And you are?

Eric

Eric...

Maria

(Turns the camera back on) This is Maria Scott reporting back from the hostage scene. The terrorist has made her demands and the SWAT team is now attempting to argue with her. The suspect still holds a man, believed to be named Eric, at gunpoint. We'll be back with more news from the scene in just a moment.

Giri

That's not TRUE! You can't say that! I don't have him at gunpoint! If he wanted to leave he could have just wrenched away from me! I'm chained to a machine! And there are no police here! I don't believe in guns! I'm anti-gun! I'm a pacifist! That's why I DON'T EAT ANIMALS! Don't you understand? Now all those people out there watching the news think that I'm some sort of awful insane woman! They won't listen to reasonable arguments from a woman they believe to be insane! It's all lost, all of it! I might as well go home! You've killed all my hopes, my plans, everything! How can you do something like that?

Maria

I told you! It was a slow news day! I just took the truth and embellished it a little! Nobody wants to hear about a story about a peaceful fanatic! You have to make it (Reverently) NEWSWORTHY!! I mean, do you really think the public would tune in every night if all the news had were people like you? We're competing against Hollywood! We don't have big stars, or gorgeous models, or the money! So we have to have PLOT!

Eric

Wait a minute! Now I thought she was nuts (gestures to Giri) but you're even nuttier!
Aren't there laws against that?

Maria

Oh! Like anyone will care! The public doesn't want the boring old truth anymore! It
wants drama, excitement, adventure!

Eric

Who are you to decide what the public wants?

Maria

WE have DEMOGRAPHICS! WE know what the public wants! Do you have
DEMOGRPHICS??

Eric

I am a demographic!!

Giri

Wait! Listen! I came here to tell the world about vegetarianism! Now YOU have
destroyed my reputation! And YOU still don't want to become a vegetarian! What am I
going to do? They'll send me to prison! I'll be locked up! Behind bars! Away from my
animals! And who will protect them? Someone like you will come along, claim their sole
purpose for existence is to feed you, and eat them!

And then, someone like you will come along and film their bloody carcasses for the six
o'clock news! I won't let you! You can't!

Maria

Sure I can! I am THE NEWS!

Eric

That doesn't mean you can get away with just anything! You're supposed to give the public
the truth!

Maria

Why won't you listen to me? I told you! The public doesn't WANT the truth!

Giri

No kidding! I keep trying to tell people what meat does to their hearts! And do they listen
to me? No, of course not! "Leave us alone Giri! We just want to enjoy our steaks!" "Be
quiet Giri! We need that protein!" The average human being gets three times the protein
he needs a day! And along with all that extra protein is fat, and the fat causes heart disease
and osteoporosis, and then they die! Heart disease is one of the leading killers in America
today! And it's things like beef jerky that cause a lot of it! Why don't you put that on your
TV tabloid show you call news?

Eric

Are you serious? Meat causes heart disease? My grandfather died from a heart attack!

Giri

That's all the more reason why you should take steps to see that you never have a heart attack. If it runs in your family, then you have a great chance!

Eric

But what do I eat instead of meat? I mean, that is one major food group!

Giri

(begins to unchain herself from the machine) Well... there are lots of things that you could eat. For instance...

Maria

Wait a minute! If you're not chained up, how am I going to convince America that you're insane? And if you really start listening to her, then how am I going to say that she's holding you hostage? You'll wreck my story! Can't you please chain yourself back to that machine? Come on, I'll buy everyone beef jerky on WSAM! I have an expense account! Just please chain yourself back to the machine? Pretty please? Pretty please with a cherry on top?

Giri

I don't want any beef jerky! What part of vegetarianism don't you get?

Eric

So if I eat beef jerky I could die?!?

Giri

Exactly!

Maria

So you're not going to chain yourself back to the machine?

Giri

There's no need to. I've given Eric my strongest arguments for not eating the beef jerky, and so if he wants to go ahead and kill himself, then fine!

Eric

(Realization slowly dawning) Wait! You're saying that if I eat this beef jerky I'll die. This minute? But I've eaten meat before and I'm still alive!

Maria

Yeah, and I eat meat all the time and my doctor says I'm as fit as a fiddle!

Giri

OK, Ok. So you won't die today, or tomorrow, but eventually your arteries will begin to shrink, you can almost hear them! "Stop Eric! Don't shrink us! We should stay big and healthy and allow blood to pass easily through us!" And eventually, your tiny pitiful arteries will give out, and that meat, over all the years will have killed you. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, maybe not for you. But with your family history of heart disease.... well....

Eric

Ohmigod! I'm gonna' die!

Maria

Get a grip. You aren't going to die. She's misleading you.

Giri

Oh, like you're one to talk!

Eric

I'm not going to die?

Maria

Trust me, you're not going to die.

Giri

How can you trust her? She said I was holding you at gunpoint.

Maria

Yeah, but that was for work. I'm really a very honest person.

Eric

If you'll lie for work you're not an honest person. And if you go around telling everyone that they're going to die today if they touch a hamburger, then you're not honest either.

Maria+Giri

But I was dishonest for a purpose!

Giri

If I don't give drastics, people won't listen!

Maria

Hey, the same for me!

Giri

Wait, I'm the same as you? I don't think so! I tell the people what could happen.

Maria

Are you saying that people don't hold others hostage at gunpoint? That could happen too!

Giri

I'm so confused. All I wanted to do was convince everyone that eating meat is bad.

Maria

(fakely) And all I wanted to do was tell everyone that taking hostages was bad.

Eric

You what?! Come on.

Maria

(Sullenly) OK, OK, so all I wanted was a story. But nobody ever would've known the difference.

Eric

That's not the point.

Giri

Yeah, the news is supposed to give the people the truth!

Maria

So if we'd put your story on, with you telling everyone what you told Eric, would that have been any better?

Giri

So we're both wrong?

Maria

Well, technically, but I always look at it as... hey! Have you ever considered being a TV newsperson? There are many openings for people with your talents.

Giri

I don't think I'd like to consider "embellishing the truth" as one of my talents.

Eric

If you're both wrong, that leaves Me to be right. So I think I'll have that beef jerky now.

Giri

After everything that I've told you?

Eric

Yeah, but how much of that was truth? I mean, meat's harmless right? You were just, umm.. Embellishing.

Giri

Except for the part about dying today I wasn't! Everything else I said was true, 100 percent.

Eric

They really treat cows that way?

Giri

Yeah, sad isn't it?

Maria

What way?

Eric

Giri says that they lock little cows up in dirty pens and starve them to make Veal Parmesan!

Maria

Hey! I bet I could get a story out of that! A big expose. I can see it now. (Switches to Newswoman voice). This is Maria Scott on the scene of one of man's greatest inhumanities, what do you call that?

Giri

Factory farming.

Maria

Factory farming. (Reverts to normal voice) And you could come along as my resident animal rights expert!

Giri

So I could really get the message to everyone?

Maria

Everyone who watches WSAM!

Giri

But you'd have to promise to be truthful. Only the truth. No embellishing.

Maria

I'd try. And if people really treat cows like that, why then the truth would be big and bloody enough! (Giri grimaces)

Giri

OK, here's how...

(The two exit chattering excitedly about their story. Eric is left alone with the beef jerky machine. He looks at it a long moment, glances around cautiously, then hurriedly sticks his money in the machine. He takes the beef jerky and runs out of the room embarrassed to have it. Lights go down)

-Jenny Kokai

