

WELCOME TO FLORIDA

By Linda E. Baggs

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CHARACTERS

CONSTANCE LEE RANDOLPH: A born and bred Virginian, 40ish
GRANT: Good ole' Florida redneck (think south Georgia) with the drawl to match, any age.
VOICE: Off-stage voice, any age.

PROPS

There is a single card table meant to represent all of DMV. Taped to the front is a sign that reads DRIVERS LICENSE APPLICATIONS, NO RENEWALS. There are a couple of stacks of forms and two small boxes - one orange, one green – on the table. On another part of the stage is a single metal chair.

AT RISE: GRANT sits in a chair behind the table doing busy work. HE is wearing a polo shirt with the DMV logo. CONSTANCE is sitting, rather squirming, in her hard chair. SHE glances at her watch. Taps her foot impatiently and glances at her watch again. SHE looks like SHE stepped out of the Talbot's catalog.

GRANT: ***(yelling)*** Number 71. ***(beat)*** Number 71. ***(beat)*** Last call, number 71. ***(GRANT puts a small ticket into the green box. CONSTANCE stands up and picks up her purse.)*** Number 73.

(CONSTANCE rushes over, waving a piece of paper.)

CONSTANCE: Excuse me. I have number 72.

GRANT: What number did I just call?

CONSTANCE: Number 73.

GRANT: Well, guess you missed your turn. ***(yelling)*** Number 73.

CONSTANCE: You never called number 72. You went right from 71 to 73.

GRANT: That's impossible. We have a system here at DMV. We use these little pieces of paper see ***(HE holds one up)*** and when we call the number written on it and someone shows up, we put it in this here container. ***(HE holds up the orange box.)*** And when they don't

show up we put it in this here container. **(HE holds up the green box.)** So the next number on the top of my pile is the one I call.

CONSTANCE: But I've been sitting here for **(SHE glances at her watch)** 47 minutes waiting for you to call number 72. And you didn't.

GRANT: I must have, and you just didn't hear it.

CONSTANCE: I was right here. There is no way I could have missed it.

GRANT: Maybe you were in the ladies john.

CONSTANCE: No. I have been crossing and uncrossing my legs for 20 minutes because I was afraid to go.

GRANT: You don't have to be afraid no more. There aren't snakes in there now – not since they fixed that broken window.

CONSTANCE: I meant I was afraid to lose my place in line. Please. No one has shown up yet for number 73. Please.

GRANT: But what do I do about the little piece of paper?

CONSTANCE: You can have mine. Just put it in the green box and no one will know the difference.

GRANT: The green box is for people who don't show up.

CONSTANCE: Fine, fine. The orange box then.

GRANT: Well . . . seeing as no one has showed up for number 73, I guess it will be okay. **(HE takes her paper and puts it in the green box.)**

CONSTANCE: But you put it in . . . never mind.

GRANT: Now what brings you to DMV today?

CONSTANCE: I've just moved here, and I need a driver's license.

GRANT: Well good, then you're in the right place. Do you need a new one?

CONSTANCE: I thought I just said that.

GRANT: No, you said you needed a driver's license. Do you need a new one?

CONSTANCE: **(overly sweet)** If I didn't need a new one, why would I be in this line?

GRANT: You'd be surprised how many people wait for the wrong tables around here. Have you read the State of Florida Drivers Manual?

CONSTANCE: Well, no. I was under the impression --

GRANT: Well, I highly recommend it. **(HE laughs.)** That sounds like it's a best seller or something. **(HE holds a pretend book up as if for the cameras.)** I highly recommend you read this book. Like on Oprah. Not that I watch her show mind you.

(CONSTANCE forces a smile.)

CONSTANCE: Yes, very amusing. But I was told I wouldn't need --

GRANT: It's kind of important because we have some strange rules in this state. Like the one about gators having the right of way.

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CONSTANCE: What?

GRANT: On account of them being endangered and all. If they're smaller than 7 feet, Wildlife Control can't do a thing.

CONSTANCE: Seven feet?!

GRANT: You just have to wait for them to mosey along on their own. Let's see. Where was I? Oh yeah, and you need to take the State of Florida Drivers Road Test.

CONSTANCE: You won't accept my driver's license from --

GRANT: You have a valid driver's license? From one of the 50 Yoo-nited States?

CONSTANCE: Yes.

GRANT: Well, why didn't you say so?

CONSTANCE: I tried but --

GRANT: You should'a told me in the beginning instead of saying you wanted a new license. Okay. Name.

(GRANT fills in a form as CONSTANCE responds to the questions.)

CONSTANCE: Constance Lee Randolph.

GRANT: Ya want the Lee on here Connie, or just an 'L'?

CONSTANCE: Lee please. And it's Constance. Although frankly I would prefer Mrs. Randolph.

GRANT: Is that Leigh as in the fancy spelling some girls have or Lee as in the General?

CONSTANCE: The General. L-e-e.

GRANT: Ya know, we're almost related. What's your address Connie?

CONSTANCE: 17 Palm View. How, pray tell, are we related?

GRANT: Didn't say we are related. City?

CONSTANCE: Palm Valley.

GRANT: Just that we almost are. State?

CONSTANCE: You're kidding, right?

GRANT: You want a license, you gotta answer the questions. State.

CONSTANCE: Georgia. Which is why I'm applying for a Florida license.

(GRANT stops what HE's doing and looks up sharply.)

GRANT: That's a felony you know - pretending to be a Florida resident when you're not. On account of us having no income tax and all. Lots of people try to --

CONSTANCE: It was a joke. I'm sorry. Please go on.

GRANT: State.

CONSTANCE: Florida. 32252.

GRANT: Have you ever had your license revoked in any one of the 50 Yoo-nited States? Canada and Mexico don't count.

CONSTANCE: No.

GRANT: I'm named after your middle name.

CONSTANCE: Excuse me?

GRANT: Well you didn't ask, but I figured you wanted to know. How we're almost related, I mean. Do you?

CONSTANCE: Will it make this go faster?

GRANT: It just might. It's always more fun when you're working with someone you know. And almost-kin is much closer to knowing someone than to being a stranger.

CONSTANCE: Sure. Fine.

GRANT: My name is Robert Edward, and you have the Lee.

CONSTANCE: How amusing.

GRANT: Ever been convicted of a felony?

CONSTANCE: No.

GRANT: It's on account of my Daddy being a Yankee and all.

CONSTANCE: You were named after Robert E. Lee because your Daddy was a Yankee?

GRANT: Yep. Since I was stuck with my Daddy's last name, my Mama decided I need a good Southern name to counteract his. And Robert E. is about as good a Southern name as you can find.

CONSTANCE: And what, dare I ask, is your last name?

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