

THE LONE WOLF SOCIETY

A Tragedy in Three Acts
by Anthony J. Piccione

THE LONE WOLF SOCIETY

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THE LONE WOLF SOCIETY

*This play is dedicated
to the countless victims of
gun violence,
toxic masculinity,
human trafficking
& online propaganda
in the United States and around the world.*

*May their memory inspire us all to be more compassionate toward each other,
and to leave behind a better world
for those who will still be here after we're gone.*

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CHARACTERS

ELIJAH BROOKS. Late-teens. Introverted, anxious and perverted senior at Barack Obama High School whose fragile morals are pushed to their limits.

THE COLONEL. Real name and age unknown. The mysterious and sociopathic leader of the Lone Wolf Society, who grooms and manipulates teenagers to rape and kill in the name of revenge and a warped idea of "justice."

SUSAN BROOKS. 40s-50s. Elijah's mother. Wants to help her son but isn't sure how.

VINCENT BROOKS. 40s-50s. Elijah's father. Full of toxic masculinity. Considers his son a disappointment.

PRINCIPAL MORRIS. 30s-60s. Well-meaning but incompetent.

DALTON PARKER. Late-teens. Ashley's boyfriend and prom date. Leads a pack of bullies who constantly target and threaten Elijah.

ASHLEY HARRIS. Late-teens. Dalton's girlfriend and Elijah's unrequited crush.

GABBY ROBERTS. Late-teens. Abducted teenager, dealing with a lot of inner traumas even beforehand.

ENSEMBLE. Students, "wolves", police, etc.

TIME

The not-too-distant future

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

The Lone Wolf Society was developed and presented as a staged reading in November 2022 at The Tank, located at 312 W 36th Street, New York, NY, and was directed by Andrés Gallardo Bustillo. The cast featured Bruce Gomez, Robert Maisonett, Chyna Jackson, Leyla Hadi-Kassim, Millie Gibbons, Nikolas Elrifi, Adi Israel, Gabriella Spielberg, Praveen US & Giorgio-Jozef Varipapa

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PROLOGUE

Cafeteria at Barack Obama High School, located at an unnamed suburban town in the United States. Several teenage students are scattered and seated across the cafeteria. DALTON and his friends - BRIAN and TOMMY - are seated at one table, and ASHLEY and her friends - VANESSA and MOLLY - are seated at another. The lights switch back and forth between the conversations and each table, switching focus over the course of the scene.

VANESSA. I still can't believe HE asked you out?

MOLLY. Yeah, what a freak.

ASHLEY. I kinda felt sorry for him at first, but I...I mean, yeah, he's a creep.

VANESSA. How do you think Molly feels?

MOLLY. *(laughs awkwardly)* Yeah, that was...creepy.

DALTON. Like, I'm still thinking about that creep who walked up to Ash the other day.

BRIAN. Didn't he get suspended for sneaking into the girls bathroom, or some shit?

TOMMY. I dunno, that's what I heard.

DALTON. What a fuckin' loser.

ASHLEY. Well, thank God I've got someone else to go with.

VANESSA. You think Dalton's...I mean, do you really think-

MOLLY. C'mon, Vanessa. He's like the hottest guy in school.

VANESSA. I know, but...he's kinda...an asshole?

MOLLY. Oh, please. He's perfect for Ashley. I'm so jealous.

ASHLEY. I know what you mean, Vanessa. I'm not gonna take things too fast with him.

DALTON. Bruh, I'm gonna fuck her sooo hard.

TOMMY. Word, bruh.

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BRIAN. Wait, you *didn't* already fuck her yet?

TOMMY. Bro, that's gotta be some top notch pussy.

BRIAN. I heard she's still a virgin? Is that- (*A gunshot is heard in the background. Quick fade to black. Students are heard screaming and running, and more gunfire can be heard. Long pause*)

END OF PROLOGUE

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ACT I – RECRUITMENT

SCENE 1

School hallway. Ashley is chatting with Vanessa and Molly by her locker. ELIJAH is tittering in the corner of the other side of the hallway, staring at and away from Ashley anxiously, while trying to prepare himself to talk to her, and also trying not to be seen staring at her. He takes a deep breath, and after a few moments, he finally walks slowly up to Ashley.

ELIJAH. *(nervously)* Hi Ashley.

ASHLEY. Oh...hey, umm... *(trying to remember Elijah's name)* um-Elijah? *(Enter Dalton, Brian and Tommy. They notice Elijah and Ashley talking, and slowly walk up behind Elijah to watch.)*

ELIJAH. So...um...how's your class going, I...I...

ASHLEY. *(awkwardly)* Oh...um...good, good. You?

ELIJAH. Great, great. *(chuckles nervously)*

ASHLEY. *(awkward laugh)* Um, so can I help with something?

ELIJAH. Oh, no...no, I was, um...I was just wondering...um, if you...if you wanted to...to go to prom with me? *(Elijah instantly regrets what he said, and it shows on his face. Vanessa and Molly laugh discreetly, while Dalton, Brian and Tommy are trying to contain their laughter from behind, as Ashley looks embarrassed.)*

ASHLEY. Oh. Um...I'm sorry, but I...I was already asked by someone else, and I'm already going with them.

ELIJAH. Oh...uh, great, uh...I-I-I mean, who is...who are going with to...t-t-to-

DALTON. She's going with me, loser. *(Dalton, Brian and Tommy laugh.)*

ELIJAH. I...I are you reall-I mean...why are you going with-

DALTON. It's cuz she's a babe, and...you know, you're a fucking creep. *(Dalton, Brian and Tommy laugh, as do Vanessa and Molly. Ashley still looks simply embarrassed, while Elijah gets gradually angrier.)*

VANESSA. C'mon, Ash. Let's go.

MOLLY. Yeah, we gotta get to swim class. *(Vanessa and Molly start to walk away. Ashley starts to follow them, but stops to quickly look back -*

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with a hint of sympathy - at Elijah, whose anger grows and can barely be contained.)

ASHLEY. *(quietly)* I'm sorry. *(Ashley starts walking away, but before she, Vanessa & Molly can exit...)*

ELIJAH. *(shouting)* YOU FUCKING SLUT!!!! *(Silence. Everyone else looks at Elijah, with a sense of shock and disgust. Pause. Elijah is embarrassed and heartbroken. He exits quickly. Pause)*

DALTON. Bro, did y'all see that? What an asshole.

SCENE 2

Principal's office. Elijah and PRINCIPAL MORRIS - the principal at Barack Obama High School - are seated across from each other at a desk, with Elijah on the verge of tears.

MORRIS. So, I'm guessing you know why you've been called in?

ELIJAH. I...I mean, I-

MORRIS. We heard from several students who witnessed it that you shouted at Ashley Harris earlier today.

ELIJAH. I...Principal Morris, I didn't mean to-

MORRIS. You're better off if you just admit it.

ELIJAH. I... yes. I-I'm sorry.

MORRIS. You should be ashamed of yourself.

ELIJAH. I swear, I-I I-I regretted it instantly, and-I...I swear, I'm really sorry.

MORRIS. Have you been bullied recently? What's going on with you, Elijah?

ELIJAH. I mean...Dalton Parker has been giving me a hard time, and that kinda-

MORRIS. Dalton Parker?? That's impossible. He's a good kid.

ELIJAH. *(quietly)* I knew you'd say that.

MORRIS. What?

ELIJAH. Nothing.

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MORRIS. I don't ever want to hear news like THIS again. Next time, it's a suspension. Understood?

ELIJAH. *(sighs)* Understood.

SCENE 3

Neighborhood street. Dalton, Brian and Tommy are seen laughing. Enter Elijah. Elijah is walking home from school, but his path is blocked by Dalton, Brian and Tommy.

DALTON. What's the rush? Where you off to?

ELIJAH. Dalton, p-p-please, I-I d-don't want any trouble.

DALTON. You think you can just call my girl a slut, and get away with it?

ELIJAH. I-I...n-n-no, I-I'm sor-

DALTON. *(mocking)* T-t-th-then h-h-how come you did it? Huh? *(pauses)* Huh??

ELIJAH. Dalton, please. I'm sorry, I-I-just- *(Elijah tries to walk around Dalton, but Dalton blocks him and pushes him to the ground.)*

DALTON. Don't you try and walk away from me, you little bitch. *(Elijah, Brian and Tommy laugh and form a circle around Elijah.)*

BRIAN. Jesus Christ, bruh.

TOMMY. Yeah, to think Ash would ever date HIM?

DALTON. C'mon. Beat his ass up. *(Dalton, Brian and Tommy kick and punch Elijah, while also taking his backpack and dumping the contents inside out onto the ground. They continue to laugh as they do so.*

Eventually, after a few moments, they stop beating him and drop his now-empty backpack to the ground. Dalton pulls out a knife and points it at Elijah.)

DALTON. If you ever talk to her again, you're fuckin' dead. *(Pause, as Dalton glares down at Elijah, before he, Brian and Tommy start walking away. Exit Dalton, Brian and Tommy. Pause. Elijah is in pain lying on the ground, on the verge of tears. Enter the COLONEL - a mysterious man appearing to be in his 30s - although this is never verified - who*

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consistently speaks with a calm and sober tone with a seemingly American accent, wearing a black military-style outfit. He approaches Elijah.)

COLONEL. Why didn't you fight back?

ELIJAH. Wh-what?

COLONEL. Or do you just not care?

ELIJAH. I-wh...who are you?

COLONEL. My name's not what's important. What's important is who YOU are, and what you do to show others that you deserve respect, and that you can't be treated like a dog.

ELIJAH. *(laughs feebly)* Didn't you see how much bigger those guys are than me?

COLONEL. *(scoffs)* That's your excuse? That they're just a bit bigger than you?

ELIJAH. Well, what would you have done in my situation?

COLONEL. For starters, I would have punched right back at them. I also might have come prepared, with something extra. Like a knife. Maybe a gun.

ELIJAH. *(laughs softly)* Uh huh.

COLONEL. You think I'm kidding? *(The Colonel takes a sharp knife out of one pocket, and a pistol out of another, displaying them to Elijah before putting them back in his pockets.)*

COLONEL. You'd be surprised by the kids I've met who were weaker than even you are now but found the strength to never be beaten down ever again.

ELIJAH. And...how exactly did they do that?

COLONEL. The only way to stop a bully is with an even bigger bully. So that's what I trained them to become.

ELIJAH. Fighting fire with fire?

COLONEL. More like fairness is the way I see it.

ELIJAH. *(smirks)* Like some kind of hero, right?

COLONEL. There's no such thing as a hero. Only those who can decide for themselves what's right and what's wrong. *(The Colonel takes out a small business card, and hands it to Elijah.)* If you ever decide you're sick of days like today, we'll be ready to help you, when you're ready to help

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yourself. (*The Colonel starts walking away but stops and turns back as Elijah speaks his next line.*)

ELIJAH. A-a-and if I...show up to this place...you'll teach me how not to get jumped again? (*Exit the Colonel.*)

ELIJAH. Huh? (*pauses*) Well? (*Pause. Elijah looks down at the business card he was given.*)

ELIJAH. 66 McInnes Avenue. Tell them you're ready to stand up for yourself. Come alone. (*Elijah picks himself up slowly and puts the card - along with his many papers on the ground - into his backpack.*)

ELIJAH. And they say I'M weird. (*Exit Elijah.*)

SCENE 4

Elijah's bedroom. There is a desk with a laptop, a Call of Duty poster, and a TV with a video game console. Elijah is seated at his table and on his computer, scrolling through his social media feed. He is shirtless and wearing just boxers and socks. He then types in Ashley's name, and pulls up Ashley's profile, which he is not technically following, and who is most certainly not following Elijah. Elijah browses through Ashley's photos, which consist mainly of selfies and photos with her friends, including Vanessa and Molly. While browsing, Elijah puts his hand down his pants and fondles himself. As he does this, he also opens a separate tab on his internet browser and visits an online porn website and plays a video of young women showering together. For several moments, he switches between pictures on Ashley's social media feed, as well as various pornographic videos showing random women showering & engaging in various sexual acts with one another. There is a knock on the door, startling Elijah and prompting him to suddenly close out of all his internet windows.

SUSAN. Elijah? Honey?

ELIJAH. Wha-? Yeah? (*As he responds, Elijah promptly gets dressed, scrambling to get his shirt and pants back on.*)

SUSAN. We've been calling you for fifteen minutes now. Dinner's ready.

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ELIJAH. Oh. Great! I-I'm coming. (*As soon as he is dressed, Elijah washes his hands with hand sanitizer, muttering angry obscenities under his breath, as he does this. Exit Elijah.*)

SCENE 5

Dining room at the Brooks household. Elijah is seated at the table eating dinner with his parents - Susan and Vincent. Pause.

SUSAN. So...aren't you going to tell us how your day went, Elijah?

ELIJAH. Good...good...

SUSAN. You sound upset, though? You sure everything went okay today?

VINCENT. Probably doesn't want to tell us where he got those bruises.

ELIJAH. I fell down.

VINCENT. (*mocking*) You fell down?

ELIJAH. I tripped over while I was walking home from school today.

SUSAN. It was really just that, this time, honey?

ELIJAH. Yes, Mom!

VINCENT. Good. Next time it happens, hopefully you'll actually stand up for yourself, for once, like a real man.

ELIJAH. Dad, c'mon. I've heard that before enough times today.

VINCENT. Well, it's no wonder you're a senior, and you've still never had a girlfriend.

SUSAN. Vince, please-

VINCENT. No, Sue. He needs to hear this.

SUSAN. But Vince, look at him! Don't you see his bruises.

ELIJAH. Mom, it's not a big deal.

SUSAN. No, what aren't you telling us? Have they been beating you?

ELIJAH. I...I-

SUSAN. (*to Vincent*) You see? This isn't something we should be talking about. I mean, if he won't let *us* help him, then why-

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VINCENT. Please, it's why we SHOULD be talking about this. *(to Elijah)* Elijah, you're a Brooks, and Brooks men have always known to stand up for themselves in a fight.

ELIJAH. I know, Dad, I just...y'know, I'm not exactly the tallest guy in the world-

VINCENT. Well, you didn't get that from my side of the family, that's for sure.

SUSAN. *(annoyed)* Stop it, Vincent.

VINCENT. Maybe if he toughened up a bit, maybe he wouldn't be getting bullied so much. Maybe he'd be on the football team, and maybe he'd actually be busy with a real-life girl, instead of watching them on the computer-

ELIJAH. Oh, fuck you, Dad!

VINCENT. Excuse me?

SUSAN. Elijah Matthew Brooks, that's no way to talk to your father!

ELIJAH. Well, he started it! You heard what he said!

VINCENT. That's it! Go to your room.

ELIJAH. Gladly.

SUSAN. Please, sweetie. Just go to your room. *(Exit Elijah.)* Was that really necessary?

VINCENT. Well, he's gotta hear it sooner or later. I've been trying to be patient with him, like you say, but-

SUSAN. Vince, he needs help. If he won't let us, I...I mean, I've been trying to persuade you that maybe we should look into counseling for him!

VINCENT. Real men don't cry to strangers about their problems. They confront them head on.

SUSAN. But Vince, do you know what kids have to deal with these days?! Haven't you heard the story about that young girl that went missing a few weeks ago? What about the shooting that happened over near where grandpa lives? And there's so much online that he could be seeing that we STILL don't even know about? If he doesn't get help...even if nothing like that happens to him, it's just so much kids have to deal with. Don't you think?

VINCENT. *(sighs)* He needs to learn to be a man. If he won't listen to me, I hope he'll listen to someone else...

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SCENE 6

Classroom. Elijah, Brian, Tommy and a couple dozen other students are seated at desks, preparing for a test. At a larger desk toward the front of the class is the TEACHER.

TEACHER. Okay, students. You may begin your test, starting...now. (*All STUDENTS start writing on their tests, as the Teacher looks down at paperwork on her desk. Silence*)

BRIAN. (*quietly, to Elijah*) Hey. (*pauses*) Hey! (*Brian tosses a crumpled piece of paper at Elijah, prompting quiet laughter from Tommy. Elijah turns back toward them.*)

TOMMY. (*quietly*) We didn't fuck you up TOO bad? (*smirks*) Did we? (*Brian and Tommy laugh quietly.*)

ELIJAH. (*quietly*) No, I'm fine, thank you very much. (*Elijah looks back at his test. Pause*)

BRIAN. (*quietly*) Whatever, be lucky that Dalton's not in class today.

TOMMY. Yeah, probably too busy getting ready to go swimming again with Ash during next period. (*Brian and Tommy laugh, prompting the attention of the Teacher.*)

TEACHER. (*looks up*) Please, no making any noise during the test. (*Silence. The Teacher looks back at her paperwork.*)

BRIAN. (*quietly, sarcastically*) I swear, they should just fuck in the locker room, and videotape it, just to fuck with him?

TOMMY. (*quietly, gesturing to Elijah*) Yeah, it'd sure make that simp more jealous. (*Brian and Tommy quietly laugh, all while not noticing that they're conversation has given Elijah an idea.*)

ELIJAH. (*quietly*) The locker room.

VINCENT. (*v.o.*) Maybe if he toughened up a bit, maybe he wouldn't be getting bullied so much. Maybe he'd be on the football team, and maybe he'd actually be busy with a real-life girl, instead of watching them on his computer... (*Pause*)

ELIJAH. (*whispers*) The locker room.

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SCENE 7

Girls' locker room. Enter Elijah. Elijah looks around to make sure nobody is in the room, and then discreetly moves toward the lockers. He opens each one, going through each of them, until he finds Ashley's locker. He finds Ashley's backpack, as well as her towel and clothes, including her shirt, socks, pants, bra and panties. Elijah picks up Ashley's panties, examines them and sniffs them, breathing a heavy sigh as he does this. He puts back the panties where they were, and then takes out the towel, and once again examines it before sniffing it. As he sniffs the towel, footsteps are heard in the background, prompting Elijah to quickly stuff Ashley's towel back into her locker, close it, and quickly hide in one of the bathroom stalls. Enter Ashley and Vanessa, wearing wet swimwear.

VANESSA. But, like, do you think they'll find Gabby?

ASHLEY. I mean, I hope so. I'm worried. *(Ashley and Vanessa walk to their respective lockers, without noticing who's behind the door in the stall, where they pull out their clothes and towels. Elijah discreetly watches through a small hole in the stall door, with his hand down his pants.)*

VANESSA. I'm just wondering who would have done it. Like, what if it's someone at school who did it?

ASHLEY. No, I don't think it is.

VANESSA. You sure? I mean, who at school do you think IS capable of that? Like, what about that guy with the pimples who asked you to prom the other day?

ASHLEY. Oh, you mean Elijah?

VANESSA. Yeah, him. *(Elijah looks hurt and disappointed, as he hears his name mentioned in this context.)*

ASHLEY. *(sighs)* I dunno...I mean, he seems too innocent to do anything too bad.

VANESSA. You're mistaking innocent for being quiet. It's always the quiet ones you gotta watch out for. Like we saw yesterday. *(Enter Molly, wearing a bath towel.)*

VANESSA. *(laughs)* Right, Molly?

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MOLLY. *(laughs)* Totally.

VANESSA. I mean... *(sarcastic)* ...what if it's Dalton? What if *he's* planning for *you* to be his next victim?

ASHLEY. *(smirks)* C'mon, I'm not stupid.

MOLLY. Yeah, it'd be a real surprise if HE was- *(While talking, Molly looks over and sees Elijah peeking outward, prompting Elijah to suddenly and quickly lurch backward and briefly lose - but ultimately regain - his balance.)*

MOLLY. Wha-who...Is that a boy?! *(Elijah scrambles to get up, but before he can, Ashley walks toward the stalls and opens the door, catching Elijah in the act.)*

SCENE 8

Dimly lit classroom. Elijah is seated at a desk, with Principal Morris standing next to him.

MORRIS. I want at least 12 pages describing, in detail, why what you did was *absolutely* wrong and inappropriate.

ELIJAH. *(sad and embarrassed)* I...I-

MORRIS. An in-school suspension is the *kindest* punishment for what you did. Each of those three girls' parents could file charges against you over this.

ELIJAH. *(increasingly emotional)* Please, if there's anything I can do to fix this, *please*, tell me!!

MORRIS. Well, you can start by apologizing to each of the young ladies you were spying on. Now, like I said, at least 12 *full* pages. Are we clear?

ELIJAH. I-

MORRIS. Are we clear?

ELIJAH. ...yes. *(Exit Morris. Elijah sighs, and looks down at a blank sheet of paper on his desk. Pause. Elijah takes the business card that the Colonel gave him earlier out of his pocket, and stares at it.)*

ELIJAH. *(quietly)* 66 McInnes Avenue. Tell them you're ready to stand up for yourself. Come alone. *(Pause. Elijah stares at the card, and sighs*

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heavily. Elijah stands up, with a newly discovered sense of determination on his face, and puts the card back in his pocket. Exit Elijah.)

END OF ACT I

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