

U n h i n g e d: a one-person play about the pandemic so far

by Estelle

INT. CONCERT VENUE - NIGHT

Bright lights on stage with colourful background. A microphone and mic stand, bar stool, and a bottle of water.

ANNOUNCER

Please give a warm welcome to...[insert comedian name].

A woman enters the screen to applause, the camera pans out to reveal that there is no one in the audience. It is an empty venue. Applause and laughter is added in at appropriate intervals throughout the monologue.

COMEDIENNE

Thank you so much, thank you. Thanks, yeah. It's good to be here. How are you folks doing tonight, good? Good, that's good. It's been a bit of a tough year for the last 18 months hasn't it?

Audience laughter.

COMEDIENNE

I mean, I don't think anyone predicted in March last year that we were going to be in a global pandemic. Or that, you know, we'd be in lock down number thirty-six under the Ford government. What's it called now? "Ontario-wide emergency...vehicle? Pull the reigns now, Johnny"?

"Whoa there. Slow down." "Yikes"?

Patios are finally opening again though, that's exciting. Yeah!

Audience cheering, camera pans out again to emphasize that there is no one in the venue. All seats are completely empty.

Throughout the routine, the lights become dimmer and dimmer, the background is lit up less and less, until the lighting on stage resembles something more like a spotlight on the

comedienne. The delivery of the routine changes, and the jokes become less funny.

The audience continues to laugh and cheer.

COMEDIENNE

Doug Ford finally decided we can die happy now. He's like Jesus, "let the children come to Pickle Barrel."

I feel like lock down as a term is the new, "it's complicated" relationship status. I talk to my friends in Australia, they're like, "are you guys in lock down or not? I'm like, "Eh, it's complicated."

"Yeah, we're wearing masks and we're on a stay at home order, but we still have to go to work. It's like, what are we to each other? Just say what you mean Dougie. I don't got time for your games.

I don't really get this whole lock down thing.

Anyone else find it weird that there were like, 65 cases of COVID in Canada, like March 8th of last year, and the whole country shut down? Trudeau gave us free money, all the celebrities were singing for us—even the ones who couldn't sing. Priya Chopra was clapping at the wind for like 20 minutes.

Now, almost 9000 people in just Ontario are dead. People in long-term care homes, people who worked in factories, or in fast food, or other like, close quarters environments. People who didn't deserve it.

But now, in more important news, John Mulaney's a big fucking slut.

Some of you think that's misogynistic, that's sexist. That's a sexist term. I don't think it is. See, misogyny, the

actual definition of the term is whenever anyone ever criticizes Taylor Swift. Look it up, look it up, that's a real fact.

"Some of you got houses after college. I got unhinged."

-John Mulaney, benefit of the doubt, we always give men the space to make these kinds of mistakes, or we always humanize men, downplay the kinds of horrors we experience.

-I was at a dinner party once where we were telling funny stories, and one of the guests told us about an assault (NO description of assault whatsoever; just mention of an assault; no lingering on this).

-she went, "haha wasn't that funny?"

-it got me thinking about the ways that women navigate the world, the ways we internalize to justify the things that have happened to us.

-a hard and uncomfortable truth about the world is that people will always pick their own convenience, their own comfort, rather than do something that would be uncomfortable for them personally.

-and that's what's been so hard about the pandemic so far: for the first time in history, every single sane person in the world, is having to come up with a way to

make this entire thing palatable. The reality of living with a virus that is so deadly we'll close playgrounds, but not deadly enough that we'll support workers on the front lines (more detail about this, talk about ridiculous mandates government has issued juxtaposed with the emphasis on going to work and creating capital).

- closing Dollarama, while opening golf courses.

-the thing about comedy is that we take the uncomfortable and we make it funny. We take what is terrible-unpalatable, and we make it familiar. We make it something to laugh at.

-but make no mistake, the things that are being joked about, the things we're laughing about, are not funny things.

-we are not supposed to obfuscate the terrible things; we are supposed to make them palatable.

-but much like the dog in the burning house all around them, there comes a point where we must ask: when does it stop being funny?

Anyways, that's my time, goodnight
Toronto.