

Ari's Ona

By

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## Cast of Characters

<u>Ona</u> :	A beautiful and wise woman of Arizona decent - 68
<u>Ari</u> :	A youthful teen born and raised in Scottsdale - 18
<u>Male Chorus (2)</u> :	Plays several male characters
<u>Female Chorus (1)</u> :	Plays several female characters

## Scene

A house in Scottsdale, Arizona.

## Time

Feb. 14th, 2012. Afternoon.

ACT I

Lights up on the stage. We see a woman who is advanced in years, but very much still vibrantly beautiful, sitting in a rocking chair; in her lap sits a small wooden box tied with a bow of red ribbon. A young woman, 18, enters with a bag of luggage and purse and crosses to the door.

ARI

Love you Grandma Ona, bye.

ONA

Love you too Ari. Happy Birthday!

Ari goes to leave

ONA

Oh, I almost forgot, I have your birthday gift here for you.

Ari crosses, takes the gift and places the unopened box in her purse.

ARI

Thanks.

Ari crosses to leave.

ONA

Well aren't you going to open it?

ARI

Grandma, I'm going to miss the plane.

ONA

It will only take a minute; California can wait.

Ari looks her Grandma, sighs as politely as a teenager can, and begins to set her stuff down. She begins to untie the ribbon.

ONA

Do you know who else has a birthday today?

ARI

Simon Pegg?

ONA

I suppose, but February 14th, 1912 is a very special day and do you know why?

ARI

It's not your birthday is it?

ONA

Oh heavens no! How old you think I am?

ARI

Uh... Like a--

ONA

Never mind! It's Arizona's 100th birthday today.

ARI

A hundred? Wow, Arizona really is old and boring.... No offense.

ONA

Old? Maybe by human's standards, but boring? Not in the slightest.

ARI

It's WAY boring! It's super hot, there's nothing to do, and it's all desert!

ONA

Oh child. Arizona has more mountains than Switzerland and more golf courses than Scotland. That's hardly a desert dear.

ARI

Golf courses? I think you proved Arizona's boringness for me Grandma.

ONA

Have you ever played golf?

ARI

No, it's for old white dudes.

She opens the box and pulls out a strange looking item.

ARI

What is this?

ONA

That's Grandpa's bola tie.

ARI

His what?

ONA

His bola tie. It's the official neckwear of Arizona. Bet you didn't know Arizona was so fashionable that it is the only state with official neckwear, did you?

ARI

I don't think this qualifies as fashionable.

ONA

Well, your grandpa looked so handsome in that bola. We'd get compliments every time we'd go out.

ARI

Go out? Where would you go? There is nothing to do here.

ONA

Nothing to do? Arizona has more parks and national monuments than any other state! You know the London Bridge?

ARI

It's falling down?

ONA

Well, not ours.

ARI

Ours?

ONA

Yes, Arizona has the London Bridge up at Lake Havasu.

ARI

Then shouldn't it be the Arizona Bridge?

ONA

It was shipped here from London piece by piece and reassembled. Just because it moved countries doesn't mean it loses its heritage and name.

ARI

Well, London is cooler than Arizona I guess. Who'd want to say they were from here?

ONA

I for one! And do the names Sandra Day O'Conner, Carl Hayden, and Barry Goldwater mean anything to you?

ARI

Arizona has famous high schools?

Oh dear...

ONA

Hey what's this?

ARI

Ari pulls out a large belt buckle.

ONA

Oh Grandpa loved that belt buckle so much.

ARI

Gunfight at the O.K. Corral 1881? That doesn't sound okay.

ONA

I'm surprised you've never heard of it; it's a very well known story.

ARI

Were you and Grandpa there when it happened?

They share a teasing smirk.

ONA

Well, the legend goes that in Tombstone, Arizona a couple of cowboys were making some trouble for the town.

The lights go down on the ladies and the following is acted out by 2 male chorus members representing each side.

ONA

The McLaury Brothers, the Clanton Brothers and Billy Claiborne were making threats

Male Chorus enters as McLaury

ONA

and resisting the Sheriff, Virgil Earp, his deputy brothers, Wyatt and Morgan Earp, and Wyatt's friend Doc Holiday

The other Male Chorus enters as Earp. They stand in opposition.

ONA

when they tried to enforce the law.

EARP

Put your arms up!

McLaury raises his gun. Earp quickly raises his gun.

EARP

Hold it! Your hands I mean!

They remain at a standoff, guns pointed at each other for a moment.

ONA

No one knows who fired the first shot, but what followed was one of the most famous gunfights in history.

A series of gunshots sound as the two chorus members begin to reenact the event. They walk about the space firing with the sounds, walking into the audience--using them as cover from time to time until McLaury falls.

ONA

Within 30 seconds, Billy Clanton, Frank McLaury and Tom McLaury were killed.

The lights shift back to the ladies and the chorus exits.

ARI

Wow.

ONA

Arizona doesn't seem so boring now does it?

ARI

Yeah, but that was the Old West, that kinda thing happened all the time.

She digs back into the box as Grandma shakes her head. Ari pulls out a red flag.

ARI

What's this flag? Grandpa's too?

ONA

That flag is the official symbol of the United Farm Workers.

ARI

Grandpa was a farm worker?

ONA

For a short time yes, but that was before Cesar came along.

ARI

Who is Cedar?

ONA

Cesar Chavez was born in Yuma, Arizona and was a really great man. He dropped out of school after 8th grade to become a full-time farm worker to help support his family. The working conditions were so poor that Cesar eventually used his experience and influence to change the awful situations his family and friends endured for so long.

ARI

Did he get them all to riot? Pitchforks and torches kinda stuff?

ONA

Actually, he fasted.

ARI

And that worked?

ONA

It worked several times.

ARI

He starved himself and people changed the laws? Why didn't people just let him die?

ONA

He gained so much attention that people felt guilty or impressed by it and they pressured-in the changes. He became a very influential man through acts of non-violence like marches and public speeches. One of his speeches should be in there too.

Ari reaches into the box and pulls out a small piece of paper.

ARI

Oh here it is. It says..

The lights fade out and Male Chorus as Cesar Chavez enters and takes a stand. He delivers his speech to rally the audience.

CESAR

Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore. Our opponents must understand that it's not just a union we have built. Unions, like other institutions, can come and go. But we're more

(MORE)



CESAR (cont'd)

than an institution. For nearly 20 years, our union has been on the cutting edge of a people's cause -- and you cannot do away with an entire people; you cannot stamp out a people's cause. Regardless of what the future holds for the union, regardless of what the future holds for farm workers, our accomplishments cannot be undone.

Cesar exits and lights shift back.

ONA

"Sí, se puede!" He would say to remind people that everything is possible.

ARI

Wow, I didn't know Arizona had so many great moments in history.

ONA

Of course; and people are making more every day.

ARI

Oh, like when Stephenie Meyer wrote the Twilight books!

The lights begin to fade and a woman walks on stage in the dark, but before the lights go on her:

ONA

Oh no you don't! I won't have any of that in my house.

ARI

Aw man, come on. I was just trying to get an awesome woman involved in Arizona's history.

ONA

What about me? Am I not "awesome" enough for you?

They share another smile.

ARI

Who is this on the stamp?

ONA

Now that is an awesome woman! That's Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman on the Supreme Court. Sad part is that's not even a real stamp.

ARI

Then why do you have it?

ONA

I made it for a stamp design contest a while back and it was rejected.

ARI

I guess she's not that awesome. I mean everyone has a stamp. Lucile Ball, Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe--

ONA

Harriet Quimby.

ARI

Who?

ONA

She was the first woman with a pilot's license and the first lady to fly the English Channel.

ARI

And that's more awesome than becoming one of the most powerful women in America?

ONA

Looks that way.

ARI

Wow.

ONA

Born in Arizona, Sandra Day graduated from high school at 16 and went on to Stanford to get her degrees in economics and law graduating third in her class. But because she was a woman, the only job offer she received right out of college was as a legal secretary.

ARI

That's messed up!

ONA

She went on to become a county attorney in California before going back to Arizona to become the assistant attorney general and later a senator. That was until she received a very important call.

The lights fade again on the girls and come up on female chorus, as O'Connor, and male chorus, as President Reagan. They face away from each other as if on the phone.

REAGAN

Mrs. O'Connor, how are you this evening?

O'CONNOR

I am doing very well President Reagan. To what honor do I owe this call?

REAGAN

Well, as I am sure you are aware, I promised during my campaign that I would appoint the first female Supreme Court judge during my term and Potter Stewart is stepping down soon.

O'CONNOR

I am well aware of that Mr. President, but I am also aware of how these campaign promises work.

REAGAN

Ha, I see. Well Mrs. O'Connor, this one I intend to fulfill this very moment.

O'CONNOR

Oh is Nancy with you?

REGAN

Haha, no. Well, I can see that you can already tell that I am nominating you for Stewart's seat on the Supreme Court.

O'CONNOR

I would be honored Mr. President. How do you think the rest of the country will take it?

REAGAN

Well, from what I hear the Republicans think you are too liberal and the Democrats think you are too conservative, which tells me that you will make an excellent Supreme Judge.

They continue their conversation silently as the following is spoken.

ONA

Even though several politicians claimed she would be met with opposition, the Senate voted 99 to 0 in her favor. Apparently the people of America had a lot to say to Mrs. O'Connor as she received over 60,000 letters from the general public in her first year which was more than any other judge in history. And not all of them were as positive as she might have hoped.

O'Connor and Reagan exit. The chorus members will enter and exit accordingly.

MALE CHORUS

Go back to your home and kitchen female!

FEMALE CHORUS

Do you expect to be a good justice and a good wife?

MALE CHORUS

Remove Thurgood Marshall and Sandra Day O'Connor from the Supreme Court! They have no right to make decisions for my country!

FEMALE CHORUS

As the first woman Justice it is your responsibility to overturn Roe v. Wade!

MALE CHORUS

Do you want the blood of thousands of unborn children on your hands?

They continue silently expressing their discontent.

ONA

Things became very tense and pressure began to build because she was most often the swing vote--especially in 1992 when the case of Planned Parenthood v. Casey arose, which questioned the rights guaranteed by Roe v. Wade.

Each male chorus stand on either side of the female chorus. With each name they take a step closer until they are almost on top of O'Connor.

ONA

All those for Casey.

MALE CHORUS

Rehnquist, White, Scalia, and Thomas.

ONA

All those for Planned Parenthood.

MALE CHORUS

Blackmun, Stevens, Kennedy, and Souter.

There is a moment of silence and anticipation before the Female Chorus speaks as O'Connor.

O'CONNOR

"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

ONA

Then she-- Oh look at the time.

The action on stage freezes and the lights shift back to Ona and Ari.

ARI

What?

ONA

You're going to miss your plane Ari.

ARI

No, no, no, you can't stop there. What happened? What did she say?

ONA

I don't think there's enough time dear.

ARI

California can wait.

Ona celebrates her victory with a silent smirk.

ONA

Well, okay. Where were we?

ARI

The Heart of Liberty.

ONA

Ah yes..

The lights shift back to the chorus members.

O'CONNOR

"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State."

I rule in favor of Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

ARI

She is so kick-ass!

Lights shift back and chorus exits.

ARI  
Oh, sorry Grandma.

ONA  
Haha, it's okay dear. I completely agree.

Ari is staring at the stamp and is about to dig back into the box.

ARI  
Wait, all of this is for me?

ONA  
That's right Ari.

ARI  
Why are you giving all this to me?

ONA  
Well you're an adult now and--

ARI  
And I need a bola tie?

ONA  
Haha! No, no dear, no one needs a bola tie. But you are an adult now and it's time to pass this on before I join Grandpa and return to the Arizona soil.

ARI  
That's not soon Grandma Ona, right?

ONA  
Who knows who much time any of us have left Ari. Speaking of time, I think you missed your--

Ari jumps to her feet.

ARI  
Change of plan! We're going on a trip!

ONA  
We?

ARI  
Yeah!

ONA  
Oh child, I don't want to go to California.

ARI  
California? No way! Explore Arizona with me, be my guide! We can add to the box and you can teach me more about Arizona

(MORE)

ARI (cont'd)  
and its history. There's Tucson, Sedona, The Grand Canyon,  
Bisbee, Yuma and so much more that I want my kids to know  
about.

Haha, Ari--  
ONA

Ona stands up and as soon as she  
does Ari rushes to embrace her.  
They share a silent moment.

I love you Grandma Ona.  
ARI

I love you too Ari.  
ONA

Now come on!  
ARI

Ari pulls Ona off stage as the  
lights fade.

Blackout. End of play.