

5-1-2015

Gwen Stefani

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Recommended Citation

Jeffrey, Kerry (2015) "Gwen Stefani," *Forces*: Vol. 2015 , Article 20.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2015/iss1/20>

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“Driver’s License, School I.D.”

I looked questioningly at my sister, who responded with a negative shake of her head.

“She doesn’t have any I.D.” I said, racking my brain for a solution.

I thought of something, a bit of a dangerous gamble. After all, it’s like they say: desperate times call for desperate measures.

“What if I show you my Driver’s License?” I asked.

I could tell she didn’t want to see it, as the I.D. I proffered didn’t belong to the party who wanted the books, but ultimately I believe that her general desire to just see some I.D., anyone’s I.D., won out.

“Fine,” she said.

So I pulled out my card, and showed her, and then we checked out and left.

As I was walking away, I realized something funny. No 14-year-old has any valid I.D. during summer vacation. Each and every one is too young to have even a driver’s permit, and if their parents are smart, their Social Security Card and Birth Certificate are locked away in the bank. And the thing about that School Identification, well, it’s invalid in the summer. Clearly printed on it is the designation that it runs from 2012-2013, or 2013-2014. Valid during a school year, but not the summer, when school’s out of session.

Looking back, I’m not entirely sure what I.D. we could have shown. But I realized something else: if the librarian is a drug dealer, then I’m at best a user and an enabler. I can’t seem to kick the habit of reading, and I’m willing to vouch for the legality of others’ habits. I suspect I will be hooked for life, both using and adding to the collection of “street books,” despite the lure of other forms of media. And despite all that, there are worse things to have in your hands when you die than a book. I just hope I’m reading a good one.

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GWEN STEFANI Kerry Jeffrey