The Slip

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by Anonymous

Summary

Via Marc Desjardins

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> "I was going to say Rozanov," Pike insisted when pressed on the awkward pause. "Obviously. Since we were just playing Boston last week, and Shane always—he's very focused on beating Boston. Because of the rivalry. The hockey rivalry. That they have. In hockey."

Where Hayden says something he didn't mean to, and chaos ensues.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

TSN Hockey - December 6, 2024

Voyageurs' Pike Has Awkward Moment in Post-Practice Interview

By Marc Desjardins

MONTREAL — Hayden Pike had what can only be described as an unusual moment during Thursday's media availability, stumbling over a question about former teammate Shane Hollander in a way that's already making rounds on social media.

When asked about support systems for Hollander following his trade to Ottawa, Pike appeared to begin saying "Shane's—" before abruptly stopping himself and substituting "Shane's rival, Rozanov," in reference to the well-documented on-ice rivalry between Hollander and Boston captain Ilya Rozanov.

The 30-year-old defenseman then launched into what observers are calling an "increasingly frantic" explanation of the Hollander-Rozanov rivalry, complete with nervous laughter and visible perspiration.

"I was going to say Rozanov," Pike insisted when pressed on the awkward pause. "Obviously. Since we were just playing Boston last week, and Shane always—he's very focused on beating Boston. Because of the rivalry. The hockey rivalry. That they have. In hockey."

The clip has already been shared thousands of times on social media, with fans speculating about what Pike might have been about to say...

Hayden's phone explodes during dinner.

Comeau: DUDE WHAT WAS THAT

JJ: you ok man? looked like you were dying up there

Drapeau: "the hockey rivalry that they have in hockey" 😭😭😭

The team group chat is worse:

Comeau: PIKE WHAT THE FUCK

Beaumont: someone check on him

JJ: is this a mental health thing? should we be concerned?

Drapeau: I'M CRYING

Jackie glances up from cutting Arthur's chicken. "Your phone having a seizure?"

"Something like that." Hayden tries to silence it. It buzzes again immediately.

His brother: *Saw the clip. You having a stroke?*

"Oh no."

Jackie sets down the knife. "What?"

"It's on Twitter."

"Already?" She doesn't sound surprised. "How bad?"

Hayden opens the app. His mentions are a nightmare.

@hockeyanalysis: HAYDEN PIKE WHAT WERE YOU ABOUT TO SAY

@mtlhabs4ever: he said "shane's" and then PANICKED what is shane's WHAT

@BR_OpenIce: Hayden Pike's non-answer about Shane Hollander is the weirdest thing I've seen all week [VIDEO]

There's a clip. Of course there's a clip.

He watches himself have a public meltdown in high definition. His eyes are too wide, sweat visible on his forehead, that laugh—god, that manic laugh. He's repeating "hockey rivalry" like he's never heard human language before.

"Let me see." Jackie takes his phone. Five seconds in, she presses her lips together hard. "Oh, Hayden."

"I know."

"You look guilty of something."

"I KNOW."

Arthur looks up from his chicken nuggets. "Daddy did something bad?"

"No, sweetheart. Daddy just said something silly." Jackie's voice stays calm. "Keep eating."

The phone won't stop buzzing.

@hollanderangel: ok but WHY did he say "shane's" like that?? possessive much???

@puckslut2024: his voice CRACKED I'm dying

@hockeywatch: conspiracy theory—pike knows something and he's the worst liar on earth

"I am the worst liar on earth," Hayden mutters.

Jackie diplomatically says nothing.

A new text makes his stomach drop:

Shane: dude

Shane: HAYDEN

Shane: what the fuck

Shane: watching the clip right now

Shane: you said SHANES??? then laughed like a fucking maniac???

Shane: im coming over

"Oh god."

Jackie's already standing, grabbing Arthur's plate. "Shane?"

"He's coming over."

"Of course he is." She heads toward the stairs with Arthur. "I'll handle bedtime. You handle Shane. And Hayden—" She points at him. "Let him do most of the talking."

Shane shows up forty-seven minutes later. Hayden's phone has six hundred notifications and he's seriously considering the garbage disposal option.

"Hi," Hayden says, opening the door.

Shane's in a Senators hoodie and jeans, hair damp from the shower. He looks tired and stressed and resigned all at once.

"Hi. Can I come in?"

"Yeah, obviously. I'm really sorry—"

"I know you are." Shane walks past him into the living room, then turns. "Show me the clip."

"You said you already watched it."

"I watched it six times. I need to watch it again with you so I can see exactly how fucked we are."

They sit on the couch. Hayden pulls up the video.

It's worse every time.

"'The hockey rivalry that they have in hockey,'" Shane reads flatly. "Hayden."

"I KNOW."

"You said 'Shane's' and then just—" Shane gestures at the screen, at Hayden's panicked face. "That."

"I was panicking!"

"You looked like someone was holding you hostage." Shane pauses the video on Hayden's face mid-nervous-laugh. "This is the face of someone who's never successfully lied in his life."

"I've lied successfully plenty of times."

"Name one."

Hayden opens his mouth. Nothing comes out. "I can't think of any right now but I definitely have."

"You haven't." Shane scrubs his hands over his face. "Okay. It's fine. People were already speculating. This just adds fuel."

"It's not fine. Everyone's asking what I was going to say. There are compilation videos. Someone made a fifty-thousand-like Twitter thread analyzing your relationship with Rozanov."

"Yeah, I saw that one." Shane's quiet for a second. "What were you actually going to say?"

Hayden swallows hard. Here's the thing: he was thinking about that morning when Rozanov showed up at his house looking destroyed. Looking like someone who'd lost everything that mattered. And Hayden had watched Shane's face when he saw Rozanov at the cottage, and his brain hadn't thought "rival"—it had thought "Shane's person."

Shane's Ilya.

Which is insane, because Hayden doesn't even like Ilya Rozanov. The guy's arrogant and intense and way too much, and Hayden's watched him lay Shane out with dirty hits for years. But Shane loves him, and that's what matters, even if Hayden doesn't understand it.

"I was thinking about Rozanov showing up here," Hayden admits. "After everything went to shit. How he looked. And my brain just—I wasn't thinking 'rival,' I was thinking... I don't know. That he's yours. Shane's—" He stops. "And it came out wrong. Then I panicked and made it a thousand times worse."

Shane's breath catches. "Shane's."

"Yeah."

"That's what you think? That he's mine?"

Hayden looks at his best friend. At the dark circles under his eyes, the permanent tension in his shoulders, the exhaustion from hiding. But also at the way Shane's mouth does this small, involuntary thing when he talks about Rozanov—softens, just slightly.

"Yeah. I do."

Shane goes quiet. His phone buzzes. He glances at the screen and his whole face changes—softens, opens up.

"It's him."

"You should answer."

Shane swipes to accept. "Hey."

Even from three feet away, Hayden hears Rozanov's acceted voice: *"I saw video. You are okay?"*

"I'm fine. I'm at Hayden's."

"Good. He is alive? Or you killed him?"

Shane glances at Hayden. "He's alive. Barely."

"I want to talk to him."

"What? Why?"

"Give me to him, Shane."

Shane holds out the phone, looking confused. Hayden takes it carefully.

"Hello?"

"Pike." Rozanov sounds firm, commanding. It grates on Hayden's nerves like it always does. *"This is not your fault."*

"It literally is my fault. I said it."

"You were trying to protect Shane. Is honorable." A pause. *"Stupid, yes. But honorable."*

Despite himself, Hayden almost laughs. "Thanks. Real comforting."

"You want comfort? Then listen—this was always going to happen. Someone would notice eventually. Better it was you, someone who loves him, than some reporter looking for a story." Another pause. *"Also, your face in that video is very funny."*

Hayden does laugh this time. "Glad I could entertain you."

"You look like you have never told lie before in entire life."

"That's what Shane said."

"Because is true." Rozanov's voice shifts, gets quieter. *"But Pike? Thank you. For trying to protect him."*

Something in Hayden's chest loosens slightly. He still doesn't like Rozanov—probably never will—but he can hear what Shane hears in that voice. The genuine care underneath all that intensity.

"Yeah, well. I love him. He's my best friend."

"I know. Is why he is very lucky to have you." A beat. *"Even if you are world's worst liar."*

"Can I have my phone back?" Shane asks. "Or are you two bonding now?"

Hayden hands it over. Shane takes it, pressing it back to his ear.

"Hey," he says softly. Then, after whatever Rozanov says: "Yeah. Me too."

The look on Shane's face—god, Hayden doesn't get it, but he doesn't need to. Shane's happy. That's enough.

"I'll give you a minute," Hayden says, standing.

Shane nods gratefully.

In the kitchen, Jackie's loading the dishwasher. "How is he?"

"Okay, I think." Hayden leans against the counter. "Rozanov called."

"And?"

"And I think they're going to figure it out. Eventually."

"You think they'll go public?"

Hayden glances toward the living room where Shane's talking quietly. "Maybe. I think they want to. They're just scared."

"They should be scared. It's terrifying."

"But they have people. That counts for something."

Jackie closes the dishwasher and wraps her arms around his waist. "You're a good friend. Even if you are a terrible liar."

"Everyone keeps saying that."

"Because it's true." She kisses his cheek. "But I love you anyway."

"Hayden?" Shane calls from the living room. "Can you come back?"

Shane's still on the couch, phone in his lap, looking thoughtful.

"Everything okay?"

"Yeah. Ilya wants to come up this weekend. To talk about what happens next."

"What do you want?"

Shane's quiet for a long moment. "I want to stop hiding. I want to talk about him without catching myself. I want to go to dinner without checking over my shoulder." He stops. "I want what you have. You and Jackie. Something normal."

Hayden sits back down. "You know it won't be normal. Not for a while."

"I know." Shane's jaw tightens. "But I'm tired, Hayden. So tired of pretending. Of having the best thing in my life be this secret."

"You told me."

"You figured it out. But yeah, I told you. And it felt good to have someone know."

"So tell more people. When you're ready. Your terms."

"What if it ruins everything? What if the league—"

"Then we deal with it." Hayden bumps his shoulder against Shane's. "You're not alone. You've got me, Jackie, your parents. And Rozanov—" He pauses. He's never going to like the guy, not really, but he can admit this much. "He'd burn the world down for you."

Shane's eyes get bright. "Yeah. He would."

"So let him. Let him be there for you. Publicly."

"When did you get so wise?"

"I've always been wise. You just never noticed because you were too busy staring at Rozanov across the ice."

Shane shoves him. "I don't stare."

"You absolutely do. There are compilation videos."

"Shut up."

"'Hollander staring at Rozanov for 10 minutes straight.' Eighteen million views."

"That's not real."

"It's extremely real. Jackie showed me. There's also one called 'Rozanov being soft for Hollander' that'll make you cry."

"I hate you."

"No you don't."

Shane goes quiet. Then: "Thanks. For tonight. For not making this weirder."

"Are you kidding? I made it so much weirder. I'm going to be a meme by tomorrow."

"You're already a meme."

Hayden pulls up Twitter. Shane's right—the memes are already flowing.

@piwonplaylist POV: You almost outed your best friend on live TV

@ilyasroza When you know tea but you're the world's worst liar

@broccedchicken "Shane's—" SIR FINISH THE SENTENCE

His face, mid-panic, in every single one.

"Oh god."

Shane's actually laughing now. "Look at your face. You look like you're about to pass out."

"I WAS about to pass out!"

"'The hockey rivalry that they have in hockey.'" Shane dissolves into giggles. "In HOCKEY, Hayden."

"Stop."

"IN HOCKEY!"

"I hate you so much."

But Shane's laughing, really laughing, and that makes it worth it. All of it.

They scroll through the chaos together until Shane's phone buzzes.

"Ilya," Shane says, smiling down at his screen. "He's sending me memes of you too."

"Of course he is."

"He says if you're going to be bad at lying, at least you're consistently bad at it. He respects the commitment."

"Tell him thanks. I think."

Shane types something, then sets his phone down. "I should go. It's late."

"You can crash here if you want."

"Thanks, but—" Shane glances at his phone. "I want to call him again before bed."

"You're disgustingly in love."

"Yeah." Shane says it softly, honestly. "I really am."

After Shane leaves, Hayden checks Twitter one last time.

The clip has three million views. Think-pieces. Analysis threads. A poll asking what Pike was about to say, with options ranging from "Shane's friend" to "Shane's secret boyfriend."

But there's also this, from @BR_OpenIce:

Whatever Pike was about to say, one thing's clear: he cares deeply about Hollander and was trying to protect him. That's what real friendship looks like, even when you're bad at lying about it.

Fifty thousand likes.

Hayden screenshots it and sends it to Shane.

Hayden: see? some people get it

Shane: most people think youre unhinged

Hayden: but SOME people get it

Shane: guess thats all that matters

Shane: love you buddy

Hayden: love you too. even though youre the worst

Shane: the absolute worst

Shane: but im your worst

Hayden's smiling when he puts his phone down and heads upstairs.

(Before – The Interview)

"The team's obviously different without Hollander," Marc says. "But you two still talk regularly?"

"All the time." Hayden thinks about Shane's text this morning: *Ilya says your defense looked sloppy last night.* He'd wanted to respond that Ilya could fuck off, but that would've required explanation.

"Must be strange—you two were inseparable."

"We're still close. Still best friends."

"And he seems to be adjusting well? No issues with the move?"

"None that I know of."

"Good." Marc glances at his notes. "The circumstances of the trade were difficult. The video, the media attention. That must have been hard to watch as his friend."

Hayden's shoulders tense. "It was. But Shane's tough. He had support."

"From family?"

"From everyone who matters."

"I imagine it would have been easy to feel isolated."

"He wasn't isolated." Hayden's thinking about Rozanov at his door at six AM, looking ten years older overnight. Looking destroyed. Hayden hadn't wanted to let him in, but he'd seen Shane in that expression—Shane's pain reflected back. "People cared about out him. A lot."

"That's good. Teammates, obviously—"

"Yeah, and—"

He's still thinking about Rozanov. About the look on his face when Hayden said Shane was awake. About how Rozanov had said *it has everything* like those two words were his entire world.

"—and Shane's—"

He stops.

Because he was about to say Shane's boyfriend. Shane's Ilya. Shane's person.

And he sees Marc's interest sharpen immediately.

"Shane's...?" Marc prompts.

Hayden's brain whites out. His mouth is desert-dry. His pulse is too loud in his ears.

Say something. Anything. Literally anything that isn't "boyfriend" or "secret lover."

"Shane's... rival?" It comes out like a question. "Enemy?" Oh god, that's so much worse. "The guy he loves to beat?"

He laughs. It sounds completely unhinged.

Marc's eyebrows climb. "His rival?"

"Rozanov." Hayden's desperate now. "I was going to say Rozanov. Obviously. Since we just played Boston, and Shane's always focused on beating them. Because of the rivalry. The hockey rivalry. That they have. In hockey."

Behind the camera, Claire is staring at him like he's lost his mind.

Hayden can't stop talking. Words keep tumbling out—"rivalry" and "competitive" and "hockey" over and over until Marc mercifully moves on.

By the time the interview ends, his shirt is stuck to his back.

He needs to call Shane.

He needs to explain this disaster.

But first, he's going to sit in his car and have a breakdown.

Shane's, his brain helpfully repeats. *You said "Shane's" and then panicked like a guilty criminal.*

"Fuck," Hayden whispers to his steering wheel.

His phone buzzes.

It's already starting.

End Notes

Thanks for reading! I'm sorry if the characterization isn't great, I haven't watched a lot of the show outside of twitter clips or read much of the book. Most of my info comes from the wiki and other fanfics (ง'̀-'́)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!