

TSA

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CHARACTERS:

JOAN: a TSA employee

BOSS: Her Boss

BRENDAN: A recovering alcoholic, visiting his family for the first time in a decade

JOSH: An ex- orthodox Jewish gambler headed to Las Vegas

MICHAEL: A snowboarder

MELISSA: A Sagittarius

LOUISE: An old Lady with ten grandkids

MAN: A man

WOMAN: A Woman

SANTA: Aka Connor Dwyer

OFFICER: An on-duty police officer

**The people coming through security should work like a revolving door. As soon as one walks off, the next approaches. This can be done with two actors playing all the roles. Some of the joy should be watching this person change costume quickly and re-appear.*

1.

Joan sits at her TSA podium as people approach.

JOAN

I.D.'s out everybody. Have your I.D.s out.

Hi there sir. Where you headed?

BRENDAN

Fort Lauderdale.

JOAN

FORT LIQUOR-DAAAAAAAAAALE!!!!

BRENDAN

It's where my family lives.

JOAN

But it's also a helluva good time isn't it?

BRENDAN

I guess?

I haven't been back in ten years.

But I am going back this year.

So...yea...things are...good.

JOAN

I LOVE Fort Lauderdale. Screw Miami. I prefer to be right in the center of Florida.
Landlocked BAYBEEE. I don't need the beach.

BRENDAN

...Fort Lauderdale is on the water.

JOAN

....um...

BRENDAN

Yea, it's on the coast.

JOAN

That is not what my travel agent said.

Speaking to the person behind BRENDAN

Sir, please back up. It's not your turn yet.

Back to BRENDAN

He said it was in the center of Florida.

BRENDAN

It is in the center. But *on the coast* in the center.

JOAN

Wow...I was there for a whole week and never even saw the water.

BRENDAN

My flight is boarding soon-

JOAN

Oh sure yep. Let me just um, scan this. C'mon little guy. This machine. You know, I just started working here. I'm um...

I

Am

New

At

This

So...isn't it supposed to make a sound or?

Beep

There we go. And then if I can see your boarding pass?

BRENDAN

You have it right there.

Right- in your hand?

JOAN

Ack! I'd lose my head if it wasn't attached. I actually went to school to be a librarian- but first of all....RECESSION, amiright?!? LOANS! But also- libraries are very quiet. And I just kinda realized- I need to do something where I can really connect with people. Really put my guard down-

BRENDAN

I think my flight is boarding soon so-

JOAN

Oh! That's right. You gotta catch that flight.

BRENDAN

Thanks.

JOAN

Enjoy your time there.

BRENDAN

I will.

JOAN

You know it's so rare these days to just get dedicated time with your family.

Really take the time to enjoy it.

BRENDAN

Thanks.

JOAN

People get so stressed out during the /holidays.

BRENDAN

/Thank you

JOAN

Good. Okay.

Who's next?

Yes you sir- ID please.

JOSH

Jesus, this is taking an eternity.

JOAN

Well, I just need to see your-

JOSH

Here.

JOAN

Where are you-

JOSH

Las Vegas.

JOAN

FOR CHRISTMAS?!

JOSH

I'm not celebrating Christmas.

JOAN

That's terrible!

JOSH

I'm Jewish.

JOAN

Oh dear. I'm sorry.

I um-

JOSH

But I love to gamble.

So this is my idea of a holiday.

Can you-

JOAN

You know this scanner is a little bit....EUGHH.

Beuller? Beuller?

JOSH

Sorry?

JOAN

Beuller? You know...from Feris Beuller.

The movie?

JOSH

I don't know it.

JOAN

YOU DON'T KNOW FERRIS BEULLER? WHAT DID YOU GROW UP UNDER A ROCK?!

JOSH

No. I grew up in a Hasidic community.

We weren't allowed to watch-

You know what-

Can you please just scan my boarding pass and let me take off my shoes and put them in a bin and get exposed to unnecessary radioactive waves in that machine like everybody else?

JOAN

...But...where's your hat?

JOSH

What?

JOAN

...didn't you say you're-

JOSH

I'm not anymore.

JOAN

Oh.

JOSH

Can you just-

Beep

Thank you.

JOAN

You should *really* see Ferris Beuller in Las Vegas though if you get a chance.

As Josh Exits.

Cuz sometimes those hotels have movies that you can rent on the TV or maybe even Turner Classic Movies might have it.

NEXT!

Where you headed to sir?

MICHAEL

Denver.

JOAN

Pretty snowy there.

MICHAEL

Usually is.

JOAN

I've never been to Denver but I've seen pictures.

MICHAEL

It's beautiful.

Great Skiing.

JOAN

Oh I don't ski.

MICHAEL

You should try it sometime.

JOAN

No.

MICHAEL

Or snowboarding is also-

JOAN

No. No thank you.

Beep

Next.

Hi ma'am where you headed to?

MELISSA

Tuscon.

JOAN

Arizona?

MELISSA

That's the one.

JOAN

Sagittarius. Nice. Party girl.

You know, I'm a Gemini. The twins? So I'm kinda multi-personality disorder.

I'm like- Joan, are we gonna make our way to the bottom of this Americone Dream tonight? And then I'm like- girl, there is still a full sleeve of Mallomars in the cabinet.

I'm like- Joan, should we put a third lock on our apartment door? And then I'm like, no Joan, lighting never strikes the same spot twice.

Gemini's are complicated.

I think that's how I'd explain this renaissance I'm having. You see, I've tried a *looooooot* of different career paths but I'm beginning a new one here at the TSA.

MELISSA

Okay.

Beep

JOAN

Oh good! It worked! You are all set.

And from a Gemini to a Sag, you don't have to take care of everyone all the time, ok?

MELISSA

...Ok.

JOAN

You just gotta take care of yourself. I know it can be challenging. You're so nurturing and you GIVE and you GIVE and you GIVE but dedicate a little time every now and then to self care. You deserve it.

Melissa begins to cry softly.

MELISSA

You know what, you're totally right.

JOAN

It's time for you...to make time for you, ok?

MELISSA

OK!

JOAN

NEXT!

I.D.'s out please.

Everybody, get your I.D.'s out.

BRENDAN

I missed my flight.

JOAN

Oh.

Hello again.

BRENDAN

Hi, Yea. I um...guess I'm not going to be spending quality time with my family this Christmas after all.

JOAN

Oh no why?

BRENDAN

BECAUSE I MISSED MY FLIGHT!

JOAN

Well why did you do that?

BRENDAN

I didn't. YOU made me miss my flight.

You took SOOOOOOOO long.

And I told you that my flight was about to take off and you would not stop talking. So the time that I spent standing here listening to how you DON'T KNOW WHERE THE FUCK Fort Lauderdale is, made it so that I DON'T GET TO GO THERE ANY MORE.

JOAN

I'm sure they can just put you on another flight.

BRENDAN

IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE! I am not going to be able to make it on time for Christmas!

He bursts into tears.

I haven't seen my family in ten years.

I've been in rehab for three months.

I don't have a cell phone.

I don't have access to a computer.

I HAVE NEVER MET MY NEICE!

YOU HAVE RUINED CHRISTMAS.

The intro to Last Christmas by Wham! plays

Smooth transition.

Brendan exits as BOSS walks on.

2.

In the break room.

BOSS

So you know why you've been called in, right Joan?

JOAN

(a little confused)

I have a sense.

BOSS

You're taking too long.

People are missing their flights.

JOAN

Well, that's transactional consumer culture for ya. I thought we were all about customer service. I thought it was important to chat with people. Get to know them.

You know after those guys broke into my house-

BOSS

Right-

JOAN

I told myself that I wasn't going to let it change my spirit.

Did they rob me blind? Yes.

Did they literally rob me blind when they ripped off my glasses and cracked them in half? Yes.

But you know what, the bridge of my nose has healed.

And I bought contact lenses.

And I will not be deterred.

I love people and I love this job and I will welcome strangers in with open arms-

BOSS

Right. And what I'm saying is...don't. Don't do that anymore.

JOAN

But it's Christmas. And I am like the keeper of the Inn, and our passengers are like the pregnant Virgin Mary, weary travellers looking for a-

BOSS

There's no room.

At the Inn.

Remember?

There's no room at the inn. They got turned away. And I think they slept in a horse stall or something.

Whatever, Joan, the point is you are taking FOREVER.

JOAN

Am I getting fired?

BOSS

No. We can't fire people.

JOAN

You can't?

BOSS

We're so short staffed as it is.

We need you to work here.

So no, you're not being fired but that doesn't mean this isn't VERY SERIOUS.

JOAN

Okay?

BOSS

This is people's SAFETY we're talking about.

JOAN

Okay?

BOSS

Terrorism. Bomb threats. Drug sniffing dogs.

We are in charge of security.

We're in charge of people's in-flight safety.

It is a HUGE responsibility.

JOAN

I never really thought about it like that before.

BOSS

It's life or death. And I need you to regard it with that level of commitment.

JOAN

Wow. Yes. I will.

BOSS

So the chit-chat is great but it's slowing us down.

JOAN

Absolutely.

BOSS

We need to take the job seriously.

JOAN

Roger that, sir. We need to protect these people at all costs.

BOSS

Good. Okay.

JOAN

Put me back in coach. Let's keep these people safe!

BOSS

I deserve a promotion.

Look- I know it sucks to work on Christmas Eve.

But the good news is you don't have to work tomorrow.

JOAN

I am working tomorrow.

BOSS

You're not scheduled.

JOAN

I'm covering Andre.

BOSS

Oh. Okay. Well...That sucks.

But- keep your chin up kid.

There's a number for a suicide hotline on the fridge there

...HR stuff.

Go get 'em tiger!

JOAN

Oh I will, tiger.

3.

Joan's podium. A little old lady with a cane approaches.

JOAN

I.D. please.

Ma'am? Ma'am? Ma'am?

LOUISE

Oh?

Me?

JOAN

EVERYONE HAVE YOUR I.D. OUT!

LOUISE

I can't hear so well out of this ear-

JOAN

A likely story.

Where you headed to?

LOUISE

Minneapolis.

JOAN

Ahh... I've seen Fargo. I know how it works over there...

Dead bodies. Murder. Frances McDormand.

WHY are you going to Minneapolis?

LOUISE

That's where all my grandkids live. There are ten of them. TEN!

I have a picture right here.

Well...It's here somewhere.

She searches her pockets and purse.

Last year they made me a sweatshirt with everyone's names on it.

They used puff paint, isn't that wonderful?

JOAN

Ma'am. No.

Look- I'd love to see your grandchildren, but we need to keep this moving along.

LOUISE

What'd you say?

Oh here it is!

There.

Aren't they adorable?

JOAN

(Genuinely) They're angels.

But no. NO.

You don't fool me with your picture and your cane. I don't know what you're hiding in there. Or up there- Is that a wig?

LOUISE

Oh dear, is everything alright?

JOAN

I don't know. Is it? One thing's for certain, it's my job to find out.

Are you carrying any flammables on your person?

LOUISE

No.

JOAN

Any household tools? Hammers? Wrenches?

LOUISE

No.

JOAN

Any SWORDS? Nun chucks? Nail clippers?

LOUISE

Heavens no. I...I...

JOAN

Good. Look- this is all standard operating procedure, you understand?

I work for the department of homeland security and it is my job to keep you secure.

LOUISE

Well alright.

JOAN

Any water bottles?

JOAN

Um...

JOAN

We have a 3-1-1 Liquid rule ma'am.

Are you aware of our 3-1-1 liquid rule?

LOUISE

Oh, ya know, I think I actually do have a water bottle /somewhere here...

JOAN

SECURITY!!!!!!!!!! VIOLATION! VIOLATION! VIOLATION!

Joan hits a button.

Lights flash. Sirens wail.

Smooth transition.

Louise exits, Boss enters.

4.

Back in the break room.

BOSS

Right so it's actually all about speed.

JOAN

And safety.

BOSS

Nope. No. Just speed.

JOAN

I thought you –

BOSS

We gotta move these people along Joan. Look at the I.D. Crosscheck it with their boarding pass, scan the boarding pass and write your initials on it.

And just KEEP IT MOVING.

JOAN

And no conversation?

BOSS

No.

JOAN

And no screening?

BOSS

That's what the machines are for.

JOAN

Automation.

BOSS

What?

JOAN

So sad.

We're being replaced by robots.

BOSS

Do you understand what I need you to do Joan?

Joan nods.

BOSS

For the rest of your shift, I will be on the floor monitoring you to make sure we keep the pace we need.

5.

Joan is at her podium. Her Boss is in the background sitting in a chair.

JOAN

I.d. please.

Beep.

Have a good flight.

WOMAN

Merry Christmas.

JOAN

Next.

I.D. please.

Beep.

MAN

Hi there. How are ya?

JOAN

Cleveland. Nice.

Next.

SANTA

HO HO HO Merry Christmas! It's me, Santa.

JOAN

Interesting. Why does it say Connor Dwyer on your passport?

Santa laughs.

SANTA

What do you want for Christmas young lady?

She shakes her head no

Makes a zipper motion to her mouth

SANTA

Not in the Christmas spirit huh?

She tries to scan the boarding pass.

JOAN

Just trying to keep it all moving along, sir. Damn machine.

SANTA

I know how that goes. I do the whole world in one night, can you imagine?

She struggles to scan.

Course the cookies and milk makes it easier.

She struggles to scan.

Well young lady, have you been naughty?

Or nice?

Joan checks behind her to see if her Boss is watching.

He's asleep in a chair.

JOAN

You know Santa...I don't know.

I have really tried my best to be nice.

I want to keep my heart open and let strangers in.

I went on three tinder dates last week.

I got stood up ON ALL THREE!

I am TRYING to stay open but I also need to protect myself and the people around me...

...Is your beard real?

Or is that a fake beard?

SANTA

Of course it's real. Santa doesn't have a fake beard.

Moment of silence.

Joan pulls at his fake beard.

A gun falls out of it.

A moment of shared shock.

Then- Joan's got it.

She takes aim at Santa.

JOAN

HEY! SECURITY!!!! VIOLATION! VIOLATION! VIOLATION!

Lights and sirens.

Her boss snaps to attention.

BOSS

Oh my God! Joan! Is that a gun?

JOAN

Yea!

BOSS

What the hell is going on?

JOAN

Oh, it's not my gun. It's Santa's.

BOSS

What?!

JOAN

You see- you told me to just go fast and I was doing that and I was doing really well but then, he just kept talking to me. And the machine wouldn't work. So we started talking. And I got this feeling and it turns out he may also a terrorist.

BOSS

That's disappointing.

JOAN

I know. But I didn't just ship him through quickly. I stopped and slowed down and I TOOK. THE. TIME. And I caught the bad guy before he had the chance to hurt anyone.

BOSS

Wow Joan. Good for you.

JOAN

People are mostly good. But some aren't. It doesn't mean you can't stay open to people, you just have to trust your gut when things feel bad.

BOSS

You're right.

JOAN

You have to TAKE. THE. TIME.

Time slows. They all take this moment in.

Now get outta here. We've got a serious security risk on our hands.

Officer? Cuff this man.

An officer cuffs Santa. Her boss leads them out.

Joan holsters the gun, puts her feet up on the podium.

Sirens and Lights subside.

Joan addresses the audience.

JOAN

Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in awhile, you could miss it.

Bowm Bowm

Chick

Chicka chicka

OH YEA from Ferris Beuller's Day Off Plays

FADE TO BLACK

END OF PLAY