REMOTE

A 10 Minute Play

by

Eric Coble

© Jonathan Lomma
William Morris Endeavor
1325 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
212-903-1552
REMOTE

Characters:

CHARLIE
EMMET
A FEMALE TELEVISION ANNOUNCER VOICE
A MALE TELEVISION ANNOUNCER VOICE
VARIOUS OFF-STAGE VOICES

Place:
A Hotel Guest Room, Columbus, Ohio.

Time:
Now.
SETTING: A guest room at a hotel in Columbus, OH.

AT RISE: Two haggard business men, CHARLIE and EMMET, in suits walk in and throw down their briefcases on the bed, stretching and removing their coats.

CHARLIE
The worst part is we just sat there and watched it happen.

EMMET
I knew the account was in trouble when she started talking about dinosaurs. Your prospective client starts using words like “dinosaurs”, “fossils”, “extinct”, you can kiss your ass goodbye. We should have known when she wouldn’t let us come to her office. Hah? First tip-off right there. Had to meet us here, like we might bring “fossil” vibes into her workplace.

CHARLIE
Like a nightmare.

EMMET
Complete nightmare.

(Charlie picks up the remote control and turns on the T.V.)

CHARLIE
At least now we get to leave town tomorrow.

EMMET
You know, I used to have very fond feelings for Columbus. That woman has single-handedly ruined my affection for a major mid-western metropolitan area.

CHARLIE
(Watching T.V.)
Hey, check it out. Columbus is on the news.

EMMET
Well, of course it is. Why do you think they call it “local” news?

CHARLIE
No. It’s the same news. It’s on this channel. (Click)
And this one. (Click)
And this one. And...

EMMET
Wait. They’re all showing the same building...
CHARLIE
That street corner looks kind of familiar.

EMMET
So does that whole block.

(Emmet goes to the window to look out as Charlie stares at the T.V.)

CHARLIE
Hey! Isn’t that our car? That’s our rental car!

EMMET
That’s our block–

EMMET AND CHARLIE
That’s our hotel!

CHARLIE
Cool! Our hotel’s on T.V.!

EMMET
Why are we on T.V.? Is there a fire? Do you think we’re on fire?

CHARLIE
(Peering at the T.V.)
I don’t see any flames.
(Clicks the remote)
Not on this channel either.
(Click)
All clear.

EMMET
Turn up the sound! Turn up the sound!

(Charlie does)

FEMALE T.V. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
-police have indeed cordoned off the block-

EMMET
Oh god oh god–

FEMALE T.V. ANNOUNCER
Of course, everyone is hoping for a peaceful outcome to the Westin Great Southern hostage crisis.

EMMET
WHAT??

CHARLIE
Cool! We’re in a hostage crisis, Emmet!
EMMET
No, no, no, no. We can’t be in a hostage crisis, we’re not even at Orange Alert, we’re at Mauve or- or- why didn’t we hear any of this??

CHARLIE
We didn’t turn on the T.V. ’til just now.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
This is as close as police are letting our camera crew-

CHARLIE
Let’s see if someone else is closer.

(Click. He changes channels)

EMMET
We gotta get out of here, Charlie-

CHARLIE
(Watching the T.V.)
Dude! This channel’s already got a title running on the bottom -- “The Westin Great Southern Hostage Crisis”! My life’s never had a title before.

EMMET
This isn’t your title -- there’s been some kind of mistake -- we gotta-

CHARLIE
I wonder if it’ll expand! “Day 1”! “Day 2”!

EMMET
Oh god.

CHARLIE
“Week Three of the Westin Great Southern Hostage Crisis”-

EMMET
There aren’t enough continental breakfasts for three weeks -- we gotta get out of here-

CHARLIE
(Pointing to the T.V.)
Look! An aerial shot! That means-

(Faint sound of helicopters overhead. Emmet moves to the window)

EMMET
Choppers?

(The sound grows louder...)
CHARLIE
(Scanning the T.V.)
They got police choppers... and news choppers covering the police choppers... and looks like a blimp or something covering the news choppers covering the police choppers...

EMMET
(Opening the window and craning his head out)
I can barely see them...

CHARLIE
(Flipping the channel back)
You get a real good view back here on Channel Five.

(Emmet returns to the T.V. as Charlie turns the sound back up)

MALE T.V. ANNOUNCER
-authorities are now stating with certainty that the gunman responsible for the series of robberies in the downtown area has taken refuge in the Westin Great Southern Hotel-

(Click. Charlie changes the channel)

EMMET
Why would he pick this hotel?? You don’t pick a classy hotel to hide out in -- you pick a dump, a dive-

CHARLIE
Maybe he’s an Teddy Roosevelt impersonator.

EMMET
What??

CHARLIE

EMMET
Are you telling me there’s a guy dressed as Theodore Roosevelt holding hostages in this hotel?

(Charlie clicks the remote again)

FEMALE T.V. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
-we are getting reports of a room... the police seem to think he’s holed up with hostages... in... we’re hearing in Room 414.

CHARLIE
Wow. So Teddy’s got a room.
EMMET
(Feeling his pockets, checking
the nightstand)
414... 414? That’s the fourth floor -- we’re on the fourth
floor -- where’s our room key??

FEMALE T.V. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
It’s unclear if 414 holds any special significance for the
gunman-

(Charlie pulls the key card and
envelope from his shirt pocket and
hands it to Emmet, never taking his
eyes off the T.V., but changing the
channel again)

EMMET
(Reading the envelope)
416! We’re in Room 416!
(Beat)
That means he’s right next door.

CHARLIE
The little scroll on the bottom of Channel Eight says 414
too. It must be true-

EMMET
(Whispered fiercely)
Mute it!!

(Charlie does)

EMMET (CONT’D)
(Inching to the middle of the
room, quietly)
...there’s a man with a gun... inches from us, Charlie.

(Beat. They listen...
Only choppers...)

CHARLIE
(Quietly)
I wonder which side he’s on?

EMMET
(Inching toward one wall)
Why haven’t we heard anything? Don’t you think we’d have
heard someone taking hostages?

CHARLIE
(Inching toward the other wall
to listen)
It’s an old building. They got good thick walls.
EMMET

Shhh...

CHARLIE

(Quietly)
Not like those crap walls in that hotel in Tulsa -- remember that? Those walls were so thin, the guy next door belched, we said, “Excuse you!”, he said, “Sorry!” -- Remember that?

EMMET

(Trying to listen to the wall)
Will you shut up?

CHARLIE

(Back to the T.V.)
Hey, they’re all showing the same shot of the outside -- I wonder if that’s his window?

Which one?

CHARLIE

One of those lit ones.

One must be ours.

EMMET

Which one?

CHARLIE

I don’t know.

EMMET

Go stand in the window and wave.

What?

CHARLIE

Go give a quick wave. Let’s figure out which window is ours.

EMMET

But--

CHARLIE

Just go wave, Emmet! Hurry! Before they move the camera!

(Emmet gingerly moves to the window... stands to the side of it and waves...)

CHARLIE (CONT’D)

There you are! You’re on T.V.!
EMMET
(Coming back to see the screen)

Where-

CHARLIE
Well, now you’re gone. Go back! Go back and wave!

(Emmet runs to the window, waving, trying to see himself on T.V.)

EMMET
Can you see me? Can you see me?

(BLAM BLAM!! Two shots echo from below -- Emmet and Charlie DIVE to the floor. Pause. Silence.)

CHARLIE
Holy shit.

EMMET
Jesus Jesus Jesus Jesus-

CHARLIE
They must have thought you were Teddy.

EMMET
I’m not Teddy! I’m not a gunman! I work for Verizon!!

CHARLIE
Those couldn’t have been snipers. Snipers would have popped you right off. Crack.

EMMET
Oh god...

CHARLIE
I wouldn’t stand by the window anymore.

(BOOM BOOM BOOM -- muffled shots from next door)

EMMET
Jesus God!!

CHARLIE
(Pointing to the T.V.)
He’s shooting back! Teddy’s shooting back from his window! Holy Cow!

EMMET
We have to get out of here-
No! Listen!

(Pause. Silence)

He’s stopped.

(Charlie pointing to the T.V., quietly)
The shots came from that window... and you were standing in that window...

(Arranging himself to figure out the directions)

So that means he’s in...

(Emmet pointing to one wall)

...that room.

(They both look in that direction)

(Quietly)

Do you think he knows we’re here?

(Charlie)
The walls are pretty thick. We didn’t know he was here.

That’s true.

(Charlie)

Unless he watches T.V. and saw your dumb-ass stunt waving at the window.

(Emmet)

Excuse me?? Who was yelling “Wave! Wave!”??

(Charlie)

(Back to the T.V.)

Oh man, they’re really bringing in the riot gear-

(Emmet)

(Watching the T.V.)

Is that a SWAT truck?

Oh yeah.

(Emmet)

Are those real? I’ve never seen one for real.

(Charlie)

It’s not gonna make that corner...
EMMET
Wait, that’s where we parked our car -- that’s our car!!
It’s gonna hit-

(They flinch, watching the screen)

CHARLIE
Ouch!

EMMET
Oh god! That was a rental!

CHARLIE
Oh maaaan!

EMMET
I didn’t buy insurance for getting crushed by a SWAT truck...

CHARLIE
Blam-O.

EMMET
This is coming out of our commissions, you know that!

CHARLIE
What commissions? They didn’t sign, remember?

EMMET
Oh god oh god oh god...

CHARLIE
I hope they show that shot again. The tires poppin’ and the safety glass -- that was pretty spectacular.

EMMET
Of all the cars to hit...

CHARLIE
(Changing the channel)
Ooo! This channel’s showing the replay! Look! There it goes -- WHOOM! Oh, man, look at the hood!

EMMET
It could have taken out that SUV -- I would have paid to see it take out that SUV.

CHARLIE
Show it again, show it again...

(Muffled noises from next door)

EMMET
Quiet! He’s yelling -- why is he yelling?
CHARLIE
Let’s turn up the volume and see-

EMMET
(Grabbing the remote)
No!  Keep it mute!  I want to hear!

CHARLIE
(Pulling the remote back)
They’ll tell you what he’s saying!

EMMET
(Fighting for the remote)
I want to hear for myself!

CHARLIE
What are you gonna trust?  Your ears?

EMMET
Mute it!

CHARLIE
Who’s more objective, Emmet, you or them??

EMMET
I don’t care, I wanta-

(Pause.  They stop fighting... both looking up at the screen...)

EMMET (CONT’D)
What the hell is that?

CHARLIE
You must have pushed a button.

EMMET
You were pushing buttons too-

CHARLIE
Where’s the news?

EMMET
What IS that?

(Beat)

CHARLIE
It looks like a porno movie.

EMMET
What?
CHARLIE
You must have pushed the button for Pay-Per-View Porn.

EMMET
You were pushing buttons... too...

(They both are mesmerized by the T.V.)

Whoa.

EMMET
"Nothing But Butts"?

CHARLIE
Pretty descriptive title, I’d say.

...are those real?

CHARLIE
Don’t look like surgery to me...

EMMET
This is like $9.95 or something, isn’t it? This is going to get charged to the company credit card! I’m gonna have to explain “Nothing But Butts” to Accounts Payable!

CHARLIE
Relax. The title doesn’t show up on the bill.

EMMET
We lose the account, we lose the car, we’re buying porn movies-

(BOOM BOOM! Muffled shots from next door -- more yelling)

EMMET (CONT'D)
(Fumbling with the remote, pushing buttons)
Oh god, get back to the news, get back to the news-

CHARLIE
(Watching the T.V.)
They’re storming the place!

EMMET
They got a cameraman with them?

(Noises outside -- running feet...)
CHARLIE
(Watching the T.V.)
That’s our hall! That’s our hall!

(Stomping noises outside...)

EMMET
(Watching the T.V.)
They’re right outside our room!

(Muffled CRUNCH...)

CHARLIE
(Watching the T.V.)
They broke down his door!

(BANG BANG BANG BANG from next door --
yells -- muffled chaos...
Charlie and Emmet never take their eyes
off the screen...)

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Oh man oh man oh man...

EMMET
Oh god oh god oh god...

(Silence.)

EMMET (CONT’D)
The picture went out! What happened to the picture??

CHARLIE
(Flipping channels)
It’s not this one either. Or here... just the outside of the
building.

EMMET
It looks calm.

CHARLIE
...They must have got him.

EMMET
Why not show that on T.V.?

CHARLIE
Maybe somebody else got shot. Maybe there’s blood.

EMMET
They don’t want to show blood on T.V.
CHARLIE

That’d be disturbing.

(Pause)

EMMET

So they must have got Teddy.

CHARLIE

They’ll tell us in a little while.

EMMET

Maybe they’ll show a recap.

CHARLIE

They’ll be showing that all night.

EMMET

Jesus.

They both sit there in their dishevelled hotel room, staring at the T.V.

EMMET (CONT’D)

We should probably do something.

CHARLIE

...We already paid for that porn movie.

EMMET

Can you get back to that?

CHARLIE

(Punches the remote)

It should still be... here.

EMMET

Yep.

(They stare blankly at the screen. Pause...)

CHARLIE

She’s a real looker.

(Blackout)

THE END