

BAGGAGE UNATTENDED

A 10 Minute Play

by

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BAGGAGE UNATTENDED

Characters:

WOMAN

MAN

UNIFORMED MAN

THREE SECURITY OFFICERS

Place:

The Departure Lounge of Columbus International Airport.

Time:

Now.

SETTING: A row of chairs in a departure lounge of Port Columbus International Airport.

AT RISE: A MAN and WOMAN sit alone with their carry-on luggage.
They stare at a lone black rollcart bag sitting peacefully Down Center.
A few moments of silence.

WOMAN
Is he coming back, do you think?

MAN
He just left.

WOMAN
Not just left. That was three minutes ago.

MAN
Yeah, but he'll be back in a second.

(Pause)

WOMAN
This isn't right. You don't leave your bag unattended. They specifically ask you if your bag has been out of your control at any time-

MAN
Right.

WOMAN
Well, this is pretty out of his control. How's he gonna answer the question now? He's gotta tell the truth-

MAN
He's probably already answered the question back at the check-in. They won't ask again.

WOMAN
So he gets off scott-free. Total irresponsibility. He's just asking to have something happen to his bag.
(Beat.)
I mean, how does he know we're not terrorists waiting to plant a bomb in his suitcase-

MAN
Maybe he's a trusting soul. The last one on earth.

WOMAN

Believes in the goodness of humankind?

MAN

Exactly.

WOMAN

There's a reason their kind is going extinct, you know.

(Pause. Then she collects her bag and magazine)

I'm going to move. Do you want to move?

MAN

Why?

(The woman looks at the bag)

MAN (CONT'D)

It's just a bag, sweetheart.

WOMAN

Then why did he leave it?

MAN

He went down the hallway -- probably to the bathroom-

WOMAN

He was walking quickly, wasn't he?

MAN

I don't know. I wasn't paying that close attention-

WOMAN

There's only one reason to walk quickly away from a bag-

MAN

I've been known to walk quickly to the bathroom on occasion-

WOMAN

Did you leave a suitcase behind?

MAN

No.

WOMAN

Let's move.

MAN

Maybe he's forgetful! Maybe he has early Alzheimer's or he's distracted because his wife just went into the hospital and he's racing back to her -- there's dozens of reasons he might leave without his bag.

WOMAN

Then why is he not coming back?

MAN

I've been known to spend more than three minutes in the bathroom on occasion-

WOMAN

Come on. Please. Let's just sit over there.

MAN

Our flight's going to be boarding in a few minutes.

WOMAN

So we'll move back-

MAN

I'm not running all over the airport because of a lonely suitcase.

WOMAN

I'm not asking you to run all over -- just over there. By the McDonald's.

MAN

You think the McDonald's is going to protect you?

WOMAN

Please?

MAN

If I'm going to die, I want to go with my dignity -- not covered with fry grease and Chicken McNuggets.

WOMAN

Fine.

(She sits down... then stands)

I'm going to tell the girl at the counter.

MAN

They'll take his bag away!

WOMAN

Exactly! They have laws about this!

MAN

There's no law about leaving a suitcase in front of a chair at the airport-

WOMAN

There are laws against planting bombs!

MAN

And do we know that's a bomb? The odds are -- the greatest chances, way over 90%, I'd say -- are that that's a bag of shirts, shaving stuff, and old underwear.

WOMAN

And you're willing to take that chance?

MAN

I am.

WOMAN

What kind of shaving stuff? Like a straight razor?

MAN

For God's sake, calm down!

ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE P.A.

Attention, all passengers. In the interest of security, please do not leave your baggage unattended. Unattended luggage is subject to search and seizure by police. Thank you.

WOMAN

You see?

MAN

That's not a law.

WOMAN

It should be.

MAN

Why would he want to blow up Gate B-6?

WOMAN

Maybe he hates Columbus.

MAN

What's to hate in Columbus?

WOMAN

We're the heartland, Marty. If you want to strike terror in the mind of a nation, you drive a knife right into it's heartland. Don't you know anything?

MAN

When'd you start talking like the Fox News Channel?

WOMAN

This isn't funny.

MAN

No, it isn't -- you're talking about seizing some innocent man's baggage just because you're getting a little scared-

WOMAN

These are scary times, Marty. The sooner you open your eyes to that, the better.

MAN

The guy didn't look like a terrorist!

WOMAN

He didn't? And who are you, Tom Clancey?

MAN

You know what I mean. He didn't look... foreign.

WOMAN

Like an Arab.

MAN

Well, yeah, I mean, not to single them out -- there are a lot of good Arab... /Americans. But he didn't look like them. Good or bad.

WOMAN

You said you weren't paying attention.

MAN

I glanced at him. He seemed normal.

WOMAN

Normal. You mean white?

MAN

Well... I mean... not that all white people are normal.

WOMAN

Timothy McVeigh. The Unabomber. Did they look "normal"?

MAN

This guy didn't look like them!

WOMAN

The next one never will! It's not how they look, it's how they behave. And this...

(Gesturing to the bag)

...strikes me as suspicious behavior!

MAN

I'm not flying with you anymore. This is too much.

WOMAN

(Grabs the man's arm)
Listen! Did you hear that?

MAN

What.

WOMAN

A click. The bag just made a clicking sound.

MAN

I didn't hear anything.

WOMAN

Oh my god oh my god oh my god-

MAN

It wasn't the bag -- you were hearing something else-

WOMAN

It came from the bag, Marty. "Click". Like a... a clock or something...

MAN

Clocks don't go "tick" loud enough to hear them through a bag. And bombs don't go "tick". You watch too many Roadrunner cartoons-

WOMAN

I distinctly heard something coming from the bag.

(Pause)

MAN

(Looking around)
He has been gone a long time, hasn't he?

WOMAN

You see? You see? I'm calling security-

MAN

No.

WOMAN

Why not?

MAN

He'll be back any second and I don't want to be the one to tell him we got his bag destroyed.

WOMAN

So you'd put his well-being ahead of our own.

MAN

I don't think it's an either/or thing, Georgie-

WOMAN

I can't believe you're willing to harbor a terrorist!

MAN

What??

WOMAN

Making up excuses for him -- "maybe his wife's in the hospital" -- and maybe his wife's at another airport right this second leaving another black bag in front of another couple set to detonate in five more seconds!

MAN

Are you listening to what you're saying?

WOMAN

Are you?? I can't believe at a time like this you're siding with them!

MAN

I'm not siding with anyone -- I just don't want to live in some bad movie-of-the-week-

WOMAN

Too late, Marty. Look around you! The good guys, the bad guys -- T.V. writers couldn't make it any clearer -- if you're not willing to accept that... then maybe you should just... get out.

MAN

What are you talking about??

WOMAN

I thought I knew you better than this.

MAN

So did I.

WOMAN

I'm moving. If you want to die, you're going to have to do it alone.

MAN

Oh, for God's sake, Georgie! You want proof, I'll give you proof!

(He moves for the bag)

I'm gonna open up this bag and I'm gonna shove every single pair of innocent dirty socks and underwear in your paranoid little face!!

WOMAN
(Pulling him back)

No!!

MAN
You want to see the truth -- let's get to the truth!!

WOMAN
You're gonna set it off!!

MAN
Fine! Hell can't be any worse than you sitting here spouting
this bull-

(They're on the floor now -- wrestling beside
the suitcase...)

(A MAN IN AN AIRLINE UNIFORM walks up to them)

UNIFORMED MAN
Excuse me.
(They stop.)
Is this your bag?

WOMAN
No!!

MAN
Yes!!

(Pause)

UNIFORMED MAN
Is it or isn't it?

WOMAN
Some guy just left it here-

MAN
It's ours, I was just going to open it to show my wife
something-

UNIFORMED MAN
(To Woman)
Why don't you want him to open the bag, ma'am?

WOMAN
Because there's a bomb in there!

(Pause. They all look at each other)

MAN
No, there's not. No bomb.

(The uniformed man pulls a walkie-talkie from his belt)

UNIFORMED MAN

(Quietly into his walkie-talkie)

We have a Code Yellow at B-6. Code Yellow at B-6.

MAN AND WOMAN

(To each other)

You see what you did??

WOMAN

Code yellow -- what's a code yellow??

MAN

It's just clothes, sir, there's gotta be just clothes in there-

(THREE SECURITY OFFICERS charge on -- two grabbing the man and woman. The third waves everyone else back, pulling a cordon rope around the bag -- all of them speaking quietly and urgently into their walkie-talkies...)

WOMAN

What are you doing?

SECURITY GUARD #1

Come with us, ma'am.

WOMAN

We're innocent! I'm an innocent bystander -- he's the one-

MAN

She's the one thinks it's a bomb -- I'm being rational! I'm rational!!

(And they're dragged off-stage, yelling. The security guards pull back -- barking into their walkie-talkies... And the stage is empty. Except for the lone black bag sitting patiently on the floor, now cordoned off in a little rope prison... And the two bags left behind by the man and woman. Pause. A "Click" sound... From one of the bags?)

(Then Blackout.)

END OF PLAY