

AN AUDIENCE AND A GUN

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. THE IRISHMAN - NIGHT

A group of college-aged men and women, SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION, are on stage performing a particularly terrible improv show.

A woman, SUSAN, 22, as blonde as she is bossy, steps to the front of the stage.

SUSAN  
We need a suggestion...

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
GO HOME!

The group shuffles nervously; Susan doesn't miss a beat.

SUSAN  
A *suggestion* for a bad place for a first date.

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
THIS SHOW!

SUSAN  
I heard disco...  
(looking back)  
Come on guys.

The group pretends to be at a disco; Susan pretends to be Samantha, the clumsy dancer.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
WOAH, hold on, wait.

IMPROV MEMBER  
Hey Samantha, come on, let's dance.

They pretend to dance terribly as Susan trips on purpose, the other member crosses his eyes.

IMPROV MEMBER (CONT'D)  
Samantha, this is not the rodeo,  
it's the disco.

SUSAN  
(as Samantha)  
One more try.

The audience might as well be missing.

They continue the routine the same way, with Susan tripping and falling at the edge of the stage.

The audience gasps. A man, JAMES, 25. Face covered in a mask. Jumps onto the stage. He reaches a hand out to Susan.

Susan reaches out and sees his shoes, his hands, then his gun. She slams back against the wall.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
We weren't that bad.

James smiles.

Susan looks around. Everyone has their hands up; she follows suit.

JAMES  
In an orderly fashion, we are going  
to hand everything over.

Susan nods weakly.

James takes a KFC bag out of his back pocket. A couple fries fall out. A couple people in the audience laugh.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
(looking down)  
Always a couple on the bottom.

A decent laugh. James smirks a little bit, hesitates. He looks at his gun, then motions towards Susan.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
Come on.

Susan steps slowly forward.

SUSAN  
I'm not handing over my legal  
*Tenders.*

James sighs.

JAMES  
You in the back, come here.

He hands him the KFC bag.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Collect the wallets, don't worry  
about the sauce at the bottom.

The audience laughs and sits back down.

James looks taller than he is, stronger than he is, smarter than he is.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
(turns to the audience)  
Can't ever get good service at  
these places, can you?

The man returns with the wallets in the bag.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
(looking inside)  
They got my order wrong.

The audience erupts, James smiles ear to ear, and takes a bow. The others join in, arms still in the air.

James is a giant, his chest puffed out like a hen.

They all begin to walk backstage. Susan hears bits of a conversation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1  
Great twist.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2  
That boring setup really sold it.

INT. THE IRISHMAN GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

The group cautiously sits. Susan follows white with shock.

James comes in seconds after laughing with a member of the stage crew. He looks as happy as a man with a gun can.

JAMES  
Great show, gang!

SUSAN  
You got the wallets, just go.

JAMES  
Oh shit...

James passes out the wallets.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
The audience loved us.  
(Pointing with his gun)  
Everyone got theirs?

Each person he talks to has to duck for cover each time a gun is pointed in their face.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You there in the back, I forgot yours... It's covered in ketchup, my bad, I guess I'm kind of a method actor. Who would've guessed?

SUSAN

So you aren't going to rob us?

JAMES

No, I most certainly was going to... But the audience fell in love with me.

Each member of the group takes a pillow in self-defense. They hide their faces behind whatever they can find, trying to blend into the couch.

SUSAN

It's only because you were holding a gun.

JAMES

I could give you a bazooka.

SUSAN

And what is that supposed to mean?

James smiles at her.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

We don't have to take this. Aaron, call the cops!

JAMES

Sit down! Aaron, don't call the cops!

Susan sits, the rest of the group cowers.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Here is the simple truth... That was fun, much more fun than stealing, what, 200 bucks? A group full of terrible college improv actors, 200 might be over-shooting it... Hehehe, *overshooting it*... I wish I could turn it off.

A stage hand walks into the green room.

STAGE HAND

Next show in ten guys. Susan, the boss, is pissed, says if you don't get it together, you can't play here anymore.

JAMES/SUSAN

Thank you.

Susan is the leader of the group, but right now, she is one gun short from commanding any room.

JAMES

Let's go out there and put on a great show. We can make this a habit.

SUSAN

We aren't accepting any new members.

JAMES

(holding up the gun)  
Can you make an exception?

SUSAN

You can't hold us hostage every night.

JAMES

I don't need a gun anymore. You need me.

James shoves the gun in his waistband.

INT. THE IRISHMAN - NIGHT

The crowd is packed, standing room only. Word has spread about this great new show. Some people stayed for a second show.

SUSAN

(walks onto the stage)  
We call this game the hat game.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(puts on a cowboy hat)  
Hey partner, can I get a sarsaparilla?

MEMBER 1

(in a gangster hat)  
Sey, what's a sarsaparilla?

MEMBER 2  
 (in a Peaky Blinder hat)  
 It's a drink, ya gaffer.

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
 Where's the guy?

AUDIENCE  
 Where is he!?

The audience begins to chant, KFC, KFC, KFC.

James jumps onto the stage with the gun in one hand and the bag in the other. APPLAUSE.

JAMES  
 Stick 'em up... money in the bag.

They hesitate.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
 Man, these speakers never work,  
 huh... MONEY IN THE BAG!

Susan steps forward. Takes the bag. Shoots him a dirty look.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
 Now!

Susan ducks and begins to collect the wallets.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
 (to the Audience)  
 Can't ever get good service at  
 these places, can you?

Muted laughter...

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1  
 (to Audience Member 2)  
 That's the same joke.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2  
 (to Audience Member 1)  
 Is this scripted?

James notices the muted laughter. He flicks the gun at the other Members.

MEMBER 1  
 (steps in)  
 Can we super-size that, sir?

JAMES  
 (nodding approval)  
 Just the meal.

SUSAN  
 (handing the bag back)  
 Here you go, sir, a number four  
 with extra ketchup

JAMES  
 Will you look at that, they got my  
 order wrong again.

Scattered chuckles. James takes note. More anger.

SUSAN  
 (steps to the front)  
 We need a suggestion.

AUDIENCE  
 CHANGE THE JOKES!

SUSAN  
 What about an alien grocery store?

The members get into file each shopping for something.

MEMBER 1  
 I need some milk, bread, and  
 zygolites.

MEMBER 2  
 Hey James, what's that in your  
 basket?

JAMES  
 It's... Uhh... Ummm... Milk.

Silence. James blinks hard.

SUSAN  
 But it's green and yellow, it looks  
 like a portal.

JAMES  
 It's a portal to... um... the  
 checkout.

Silence. James slumps over. More anger.

MEMBER 2  
 Be careful that stuff is  
 radioactive.

SUSAN  
And high in sodium.

The audience laughs. James creeps backwards.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
Can you read this label for me?  
It's really small.

JAMES  
Sure, it says...

He draws a blank. The novelty has worn off.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
That's it.  
(jumps into the crowd)  
Wallets!

James holds up the KFC bag for the audience they pile their wallets in.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
(moving to the bartender)  
You too!

James tries to get one more joke out before he leaves, but the bag breaks and all the wallets fall out. The audience erupts.

James takes a couple of wallets, a final look at the stage and a bow.

FADE OUT.