

# **BAGGAGE**

## **By Christian Kiley**

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## CHARACTERS

CHECKER	Is responsible for enforcing the rules
GUESS #1	Has a rolling suitcase exactly like Guess #2
GUESS #2	Has a rolling suitcase exactly like Guess #1
TOTE	Carries an expensive Coach purse
GYM	Carries an athletic bag
MESSENGER	Carries a mail-style shoulder bag
DIAPER	Carries a diaper bag
PAIL	Carries a child's lunch box
NUMBER 13 AND NEXT GROUP	The new group <i>The characters, other than Checker, are named for the bags they carry.</i>

## Props

2 matching, rolling suitcases (**GUESS #1 and GUESS #2**)  
Clothing for both suitcases  
Journal with several written entries (Guess #1)  
Expensive (**looking**) purse  
Cosmetics and makeup  
Pill bottle  
Gym bag  
Miscellaneous athletic clothing  
Shoulder bag (**messenger style**)  
Letters (**some opened, some unopened**)  
Diaper bag  
Baby supplies (**diapers, powder, cream, etc.**)  
Children's lunch box  
Child's thermos and sandwich  
Paper (**for Checker to play with**)  
A counter (**digital stopwatch or similar**) that can be worn around  
Checker's neck  
Bags for the extras (**so that it appears that the cycle will repeat itself**)

## Production Notes

There is a platform where Checker stands to look through the baggage of the arriving people. This platform has two staircases leading up one side for arrivals and down the other side for departures. Each staircase is appropriately labeled for “arrivals” and “departures”. Checker's station should have a small stand or other flat surface to set baggage on for checking and inspection. Behind the station, accessible only to those who have made it through Checker's search, are seven doors labeled: *Isolation, Anger, Regret, Guilt, Deception, Control, Delusion*. In the end, each baggage holder walks to the door that represents the personal baggage that they are going to leave behind. The doors can be operational but they do not have to be (they can be merely door frames). In the world premier production, each character faced their door and the new group entered on the arrival side as the lights faded, indicating the cyclical nature of life. This thematic thread suggests that people never stop facing their demons or skeletons within their lives. In the case when doors are unavailable, signs may be used with the seven words on them. This depends largely on the director and production team and their design concept for the show. Please feel free to explore the metaphor of “baggage” in ways that challenge the creative team and the audience.

“Baggage” was produced by Great Oak High School (Temecula, CA) Theatre Arts Department and premiered on February 13, 2008, at the University of La Verne One-Act Festival (La Verne, CA). It was awarded Best Production. Aaron Niotta was awarded Excellence in Acting for the role of Checker. The premiere of “Baggage” was directed by Justin Girard. The playwright would like to thank the director, cast, and creative team for their invaluable input during the creative process.

GUESS #1 - Michael Guccione

GUESS #2 - Haylan Gilbert

CHECKER - Aaron Niotta

GYM - Richard Rogers

DIAPER - Sandra Kieler

PAIL - Courtney Duncan

TOTE - Ashley Jenness

MESSANGER- Patrick Bailey

NUMBER 13 AND NEXT GROUP- Angela Hewitson, Cole Krater,  
Katherine Vestakis, Gregory Dernbach, Lauren Rodriguez, Danielle  
Ouimet, Chelsea Cohen

Student Directors: Danielle Hicks, Justine Jeninga, Brittany Richardson

Design/Conceptualization:- Carissa Cadogan, Alison Butler, Justin Fullerton, Karli Getchel, Josephine Havers, Sean Lobb, Jhuanna Mendoza, Veronika Mohr, Adiel Mora, Kirstie Parro, Rachel Rice, Gina Steward, Brittney Watkins, Arrie Wilson

Editing/Proofreading: Bill and Ellen Kiley

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Christian Kiley

***(As the lights come up, there are a number of people anxiously waiting for the CHECKER, who is concentrating on folding and manipulating a piece of paper.)***

GUESS #1: If you don't mind, some of us have been waiting here an exorbitant amount of time.

GUESS #2: Yes, how very well said.

CHECKER: Hold on, hold on, I've almost got it.

GUESS #2: This is egregious.

GUESS #1: True, but perhaps we should simply say outrageous.

CHECKER: Oh, calm down, Thurston Thesaurus.

GUESS #1: Excuse me?

CHECKER: If "excuse me" is the most feared weapon in your linguistic arsenal, I would stick to games like hangman, my little poppycock.

GUESS #2: Well, I don't much like the sound of that.

GUESS #1: Nor I.

CHECKER: Tell me. . . what does this look like? ***(holds up a mangled piece of paper)***

GUESS #2: I wasn't aware that Van Gogh worked in papier-mâché.

GUESS #1: Game point, you. Marvelously played, darling.

CHECKER: It is supposed to be an egret.

TOTE: Can we please move this along?

CHECKER: Fine, fine. This is a high-pressure job, and I serve you better when my Ti Chi is balanced, and I don't have bipolarized serotonin levels.

GYM: Call a freakin' number already.

CHECKER: B7. B7.

GYM: There are no letters on these tickets. Quit messing around.

CHECKER: Sorry, I am a bingo caller at the senior center on weekends.

GUESS #1: Another peon striving for mediocrity.

GUESS #2: Oh my dear, you are truly scandalous.

MESSENGER: Some of us have serious work to tend to.

DIAPER: Yes. Please call a number.

CHECKER: Yes, yes. Call a number, scan the bar code, punch, click, roll, stamp, validate, update, upgrade, give me the current exchange rate, exchange this for me, but I don't have a receipt, and do it now and with a smile. I see how it is. And that is how it is. ***(looks at a device hanging around her/his neck)*** Number seven.

GUESS #1: Oh, good. That's me.

**(Both GUESS #1 and #2 move toward the counter)**

CHECKER: 'Fraid not.

GUESS #1: Excuse me?

CHECKER: One customer at a time, please.

GUESS #2: But we always go together. See the coordination?  
Everything matches.

CHECKER: Ah, yes. A strained superficial attempt to salvage a soulless relationship. In the voucher that you purchased, there was an agreement which you signed. I will refer you to page eleven, article nineteen; there is an amendment to subsection D that says, and I quote, "no tandem checking will be permitted at any time."

GUESS #1: Couldn't you make an exception?

CHECKER: Number seven. Last call.

GUESS #1: I'll wait for you on the other side.

GUESS #2: Just let the next person go, and we can wait together.

**(GUESS #1 places his bag on the table)**

GUESS #1: It'll be faster this way.

CHECKER: Please step back.

GUESS #1: Why, I'm just-

CHECKER: Sir, I will not ask you again.

**(GUESS #1 takes a step back. CHECKER places gloves on hands and opens the bag of GUESS #1 and begins to search the items in the bag.)**

GUESS #1: Is this absolutely necessary?

CHECKER: Absolutely.

GUESS #1: Are you nearly finished?

CHECKER: Nearly. You're an Armani man. Wow. This is quite a haul. You've got the equivalent of a small country's gross domestic product in here. Hey, dress well or feed hundreds of people. I get it. Silk blend trumps boiled rice every time.

GUESS #1: That's quite enough.

CHECKER: Yeah, yeah. Save your curtsies and excuse-mes for the concierge. **(finding a journal)** What have we here? A diary . . . sorry, journal, or day planner. . . or. . . or perhaps. . . could it be? A book of secrets. **(GUESS #1 lunges for the book)** I'll take that as a yes.

**(GUESS #2 steps forward)**

CHECKER: I'm taking it you've never seen this before.

GUESS #2: No.

GUESS #1: It's work related.

CHECKER: Maybe so. And it's no sin to work a little on vacation. But is it a sin to vacation a little at work? Shall we read a selection? Yes. **(thumbing through the journal)** I think we shall. "I can not live another day with this coordinated lie. It is stifling me, choking me, I can't do this anymore. Help. Get me out of here."

GUESS #1: I never wrote that.

**(CHECKER closes the bag and sets it on the other side of the table.)**

CHECKER: You are clear to go. But I will be keeping this **(holding onto the book)** Number eight.

TOTE: Yes. Here. **(hands over her bag)**

CHECKER: So eager. And after what you just witnessed? Strange.

TOTE: Just do your job.

CHECKER: Oh, don't you worry, not one bit. I will. **(Checker looks through Tote's bag)** A lot of makeup. Either you're a supermodel or a clown. Are you the bearded lady or a refined circus freak like one of them Cirque de Soleil clowns? But they don't like to be called that I imagine. Not a lot of run-of-the-mill clowns that can twist into a pretzel while singing Les Miserable and flambéing pheasant from a flaming chandelier. You can't do that? Can you Clownie? Can you? **(finds something)** Look. Candy? Vitamins? Drugs. Are you a pill-popper Clownie?

TOTE: My name is Tote.

CHECKER: **(holding up a pill bottle)** Are you addicted to pharmaceuticals, Clownie?

GYM: Why don't you lay off her, you self-important bellhop!

CHECKER: What was that?

GYM: You're a step below a valet, you degenerate baggage handler.

CHECKER: Does a valet get to fondle your innermost secrets?

GYM: A sick pervert does.

CHECKER: Ah! No! I'm wounded! The truth, it stings. . .it hurts. . .it reminds me why I escaped the condemnation of the real world. Page nine, article sixteen states, "slurs and slander directed toward the checker will result in a spot search of all baggage and confiscation of any suspicious items". Clownie, I'll be keeping these pills. You may proceed. **(waving her through)** Hero-boy, bring your jock bag over here.

GYM: I am not next. I am ten.

CHECKER: Article sixteen.

GYM: No.

Baggage – Page 8

CHECKER: Stubborn. Such a wonderful secondary quality to complement your primary quality of stupidity.

GYM: You should be fired.

CHECKER: Good! Please fill out a comment card. Regardless of how you score me, I get a free soft serve cone at Softy Swirls for each comment card submitted.

***(Gym starts to walk away.)***

CHECKER: You're scared. Ain't such a tough guy after all. Gym bag full of what? Tutus. Pink fluffy tutus. You a prima ballerina or just a coward who can only wear the truth in private. ***(GYM tosses down his bag and charges CHECKER. MESSENGER and PAIL hold GYM back. From this point on TOTE gradually looks more and more sick.)***

CHECKER: You can take your kiwi tarts and lyrics to the best musical ballads of all time into the bubble bath with your luffa and your collection of Lifetime movies. But I don't need to check your bag. You're not going to the other side.

GYM: Fine.

CHECKER: Number nine please.

MESSENGER: Yes, could we make it snappy, I've got important parcels to deliver.

CHECKER: Hold on, you're not Lord Primpington, and I'm not your loyal butler Jeeves. Why are they always called Jeeves? I guess that's so that you can just replace them and not have to go to the trouble of remembering another name. "Yes sir, tea for two and snappy. Would you like it in the study, sir?"

MESSENGER: This letter is of utmost importance.

CHECKER: Place your bag on the checking station.

MESSENGER: Alright. ***(places his satchel on the table)***

***(CHECKER looks through the bag)***

CHECKER: This looks good. . .except. . .maybe you can explain to me why all these letters have already been opened. You're a mail thief . . .or do you call yourself a Bandito or one of Robin's Merry Band of Postal Pilferers? Ah, crime is so romantic.

MESSENGER: You can take all of those letters, destroy them for all I care, it's better that way. But just let me deliver this one.

CHECKER: Article twenty-three clearly stipulates that: "no item or items may be removed and separated from any bag at any time or for any reason without the express consent of the Checker."

GYM: Your ego eclipses the sun.

CHECKER: If you had a V-19R, the violet one, the one in triplicate, then maybe. . .do you?

MESSENGER: What do you think? Do you?

CHECKER: Perhaps my ego is too busy eclipsing the sun. (*reaches into the bag*) I want to read a few. Come on!

MESSENGER: Please.

CHECKER: “Dear Mr. Wagner: We regret to inform you that you have been evicted from your-”

*(MESSENGER grabs the bag and letters spill out. He frantically picks them up, referring to them as he goes.)*

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