

THE MAN WHO KNEW HIS STUFF

A Ten-Minute Dramatic Comedy Duet

by
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CAST:

ROSCOE QUAYLE – a hospital patient

JOE PINCHBECK – a security guard

SETTING: A corridor in the Morrisville State Psychiatric Hospital. (This can be done on a bare stage.)

AT RISE: The stage is dimly lit. After a beat, we see the stream of a flashlight. Then a security guard, **JOE PINCHBECK**, enters, checking about with the flashlight. HE hears noises. HE puts out his light. The noises become louder, closer. **ROSCOE QUAYLE** enters in his pajamas. HE carries a suitcase and a number of boxes and plastic bags. HE has difficulty carrying everything. HE drops a box. **JOE** flips on the corridor light.)

For contest purposes, this play can easily be done without props, which can be mimed.

JOE: Hold on.

ROSCOE: Who...who are you?

JOE: Joe Pinchbeck. Hospital security.

ROSCOE: Oh...Oh...That's good.

JOE: What do you mean, that's good?

ROSCOE: I got scared for a second. I'm Roscoe Quayle. I'm a patient here. Fourth floor. I'm one of Dr. Gutig's patients.

JOE: What're you doing out in the hallway, down here on the first floor? And what is all this...this stuff?

ROSCOE: I'm thirsty. I'm going down to the game room for a coke. I'm going for a coke, that's all.

JOE: You're just going for a coke?

ROSCOE: That's right. A cold coke from the machine.

JOE: Well, then, if you're just comin' down to the game room for a cold coke, what's all this?

ROSCOE: My stuff.

JOE: Your stuff?

ROSCOE: Yes, my stuff. All my stuff. From my room. (**Pause. JOE gives him a look.**) Good grief, here, I'll show you.

(**ROSCOE opens his suitcase**) See? Socks. Extra pajamas. Magazines. My digital alarm.

JOE: This looks like an expensive clock.

ROSCOE: Oh, it is. (**JOE picks up a fountain pen from the suitcase.**) My fountain pen.

JOE: I haven't seen one of these since I was a kid. My father had one.

ROSCOE: They're making a comeback. Fountain pens. I keep green ink in it. I like green ink. (**JOE replaces the pen and picks up a new shirt still in the cardboard and wrapper.**) Extra shirts.

JOE: This is silk.

ROSCOE: Silk, yeah. I love silk shirts.

JOE: I've never worn a silk shirt.

ROSCOE: (**as JOE replaces the shirt**) In this bag I have shoes and magazines. In this box, I have sneakers and white socks. In this other bag is my dirty clothes. My camera's hidden under the dirty clothes. This bag has candy and cookies in it. And in this I have my toothbrush and my toothpaste and my sham poo and my...

JOE: Okay. Okay. So you got all your stuff with you. I can see that. But why're you dragging it all down to the game room just to buy a coke?

ROSCOE: (**ROSCOE looks at him**) Why?

JOE: Yeah, why? Why don't you go from your room to the coke machine without all this stuff?

ROSCOE: Because somebody would take something, that's why.

JOE: Somebody would take something?

ROSCOE: I'm surprised you have to ask. Somebody always takes something.

JOE: Has anyone ever stolen anything from you?

ROSCOE: Of course not. I always take my stuff with me wherever I go here.

JOE: Whenever you go...anywhere in this hospital?

ROSCOE: Yeah. To therapy. To lunch. If I go for a walk on the grounds, I take my stuff. Dr. Gutig's got this notion that he wants me to leave one bag of my stuff in the room each time I go to therapy, so that eventually, I'll come to therapy with no bags. (**ROSCOE laughs**)

JOE: And you leave one bag each time you go to a session?

ROSCOE: Are you kidding? I leave bags filled with old newspapers. I've never once left any of my stuff. Dr. Gutig doesn't know. He thinks I'm leaving some of this.

JOE: Isn't he gonna find out – in the long run, I mean?

ROSCOE: I don't care. I'm not leaving my stuff up in that room for some idiot thief to take.

JOE: Have people – I mean, before you came to the hospital – have people swiped your stuff?

ROSCOE: Everyone's always trying to take something away from you.

JOE: Who?

ROSCOE: The people at work. In my office. They take stuff. Sticky pads. Felt pens. Lead pencils. Purchase vouchers because they run out. People often would take stuff. Where've you been? Where do you live that you don't know that?

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