

Monitors

Cast of Characters

Lawrence, an average weight male security officer, African-American, in his mid-fourties.

Isabella, a heavysset female mall security officer, Hispanic/Caucasian, in her early-twenties.

Numerous mall-goers of varying age, race, gender, and physical description.

A specific, and very unusual mall-goer.

The play takes place in Beaver Creek, Ohio throughout the “The Greene” mall in the Summer of 1994.

Scene I

The security room of The Greene mall is dark, all but the flickering lights of the bulky closed circuit TV screens. Lawrence sits alone at one of the numerous chairs strewn about the room, with his feet resting on one of the monitors. He can be heard snoring from easily 3 rooms away.

The clock on the wall opposite the monitors shows 8:30 AM.

[The door to the security room opens with a loud groan. Lawrence’s sleep is undisturbed]

Isabella: “Y’know we really need to get this darn door oiled or something.”

[Isabella gropes the wall to her left until she finds the light switch, and the room floods with the harsh yellow light of the incandescent bulbs on the ceiling]

Lawrence: [Grunts] “Why with the lights? It’s still the middle of the fuckin’ night!”

Isabella: “Actually it’s about half an hour before we have to start our job.” [She glares at

Lawrence] “And watch your language, old man, can’t have another complaint against you.”

Lawrence: “Why are you workin today, young’n?”

Isabella: [She sighs] “Covering for Nancy.”

[Lawrence stands and stretches, making multiple loud pops as his bones adjust from the awkward sleeping position]

Isabella: [Makes audible noises of disgust] “Stopstopstopstop! You KNOW that I hate that noise!”

[Lawrence mocks her face of disgust with a toothy grin. He grabs his security jacket from the chair that was his bed and walks towards Isabella]

Lawrence: “C’mon young’n. Might as well do something before the rabble comes through.”

[The two exit the room to begin their pre-opening rounds. The lights go out in the security room and it is left only illuminated by the monitors once more]

Scene II

The clock shows 11:30 PM. The lunch rush has just begun to arrive, and the mall is as active as ever. Mariah Carey’s “Hero” plays over the mall’s speaker system. People aimlessly wander about the mall, being drawn in by the bright colors of the advertisements. The lights in the security room are off. The faces of Lawrence and Isabella are illuminated by the monitors they are watching closely.

Isabella: “I hate the day shift so much. There’s too many people to watch.” [She groans loudly] “Don’t these people have anything BETTER to do on a beautiful day?”

Lawrence: “You think the average consumers are people... That’s a laugh.” [He points to the monitor directly in front of him] “Take a look at this poor slop.”

[A slightly overweight man in his mid thirties is staring with a vapid expression at an advertisement for women’s lingerie. He has brightly dyed green hair, but with a large bald spot in the center.]

Lawrence: “This guy here has no life. I’m guessin-” [He pauses to collect his thoughts] “I’m guessin that this guy grew up in one of them ‘babyin’ houses.”

Isabella: “Yeah... I can kind of see what you mean. Joe Schmo over here got anything he wanted from his mommy, cuz his daddy wasn’t around.”

Lawrence: “Probably was some kind of alcoholic.” [He chuckles] “Just like my pa.” [He laughs again as he takes a swig of his brown-bagged drink]

Isabella: “He hit puberty and decided that he was going to be a rebel. Stopped listening to his precious mommy and did everything to try and make her mad.” [She laughs] “But she wouldn’t get mad because he’s her precious little baby!”

[The two laugh as the man continues to stare at the lingerie ad]

Lawrence: “That’s the beauty of the day shift, young’n. Gives you lots of material for shit like that!”

Isabella: [She stifles her laughter] “I have to agree that was fun. I feel kind of bad making fun of him.”

Lawrence: “Ah what’s the harm, they ain’t people -- just god damned brainless consumers.”

[He takes a swig of his drink] “Listen to anything they’re told without another thought.”

[An awkward silence permeates the room. Even the noise of Madonna’s “I’ll Remember” seems to be drowned out. The noiseless monitors seem to stare back at the pair, as if waiting for the guards’ words to once again add life to the pictures they show. The silence continues uninterrupted for a few minutes while the mall-goers on the screen continue their silent acting.

Finally, the silence is shattered, by Lawrence breaking into a coughing fit]

Isabella: “Are you alright?” [She extends her hand out towards Lawrence] “Do you need anything?”

Lawrence: “Ah fu--” [Coughing continues] “I’ll be fine, don’t worry yerself.” [A final, loud cough] “Now, where was we.” [He looks around the monitors again]

[Monitor 7 shows the video store. Outside stands a group of teenagers, all wearing hoodies.]

Lawrence: “Well well. Got something maybe.”

Isabella: “What?”

[Lawrence taps the monitor, pointing directly at the group]

Lawrence: “Now why in the hell would you wear a hoodie when it’s so damn hot?” [He smiles] “Looks like we get to actually do something today.”

[Lawrence stands, and once again adjusts his bones. They pop loudly, disturbing Isabella’s examination of Monitor 7]

Isabella: [Shudders] “One more time, I swear. I’m going to hit you if you keep doing that!”

[The music in the mall changes abruptly to Aerosmith’s “Crazy” as the two leave the room. The monitors continue to play their silent films]

Scene III

The clock shows 3:00 PM. Isabella is sleeping in the corner of the security room with her jacket covering her face. The lights of the room are on for a change, and they give the room a strange yellow glow. Lawrence sits at the monitors, watching the silent actors move across the screens. The mall is barely half as full as at lunch. Next to Lawrence sits numerous empty styrofoam cups, with coffee residue.

[Lawrence takes a sip of a freshly brewed coffee]

Lawrence: “So what’s the definitive 80’s teen movie?”

Isabella: [Removes her jacket from her face, and shields her eyes against the lights] “What?”

Lawrence: “The way I see it, it’s ‘Ferris Bueler’s Day Off’. It’s the perfect teen movie.”

Isabella: [Yawning, and still groggy] “You’re crazy.”

Lawrence: “Bullshit.”

[Isabella glares at Lawrence as she stands and stretches, causing an audible popping noise. She looks at Lawrence, embarrassed]

Isabella: “While I agree John Hughes is the perfect teen movie director, ‘Bueler’ isn’t his best work.” [She looks at Lawrence confidently] “Gotta be the ‘Breakfast Club’.”

Lawrence: “Oh get out of here, young’n. You’re still too angsty cuz of them hormones. No sane person likes that movie.”

Isabella: “Of course they do! It’s Hughes’ best film!”

Lawrence: “Nobody wants to be reminded how god damned awful it is being a teenager. That whole movie is kids complaining about being kids! All it does is show how the world is just shit!”

Isabella: “It relates to teenagers so well! The characters are going through what we were going through at the time!” [Looks at Lawrence quizzically] “I should know, I was a teenager then. What makes you the expert?”

Lawrence: “Kids were just hittin the awful teenage years. Realized it was either hate the shit, or enjoy it. I decided on the latter.”

[He takes another sip of the coffee. The music in the mall changes to The Beatles’ “Twist and Shout”]

Lawrence: “Y’see ‘Bueler’ is the best, because it’s just fun. Everyone wants to be Bueler. Lets you forget about the real world for a while. Escapism, the best kind of movie.” [Looks at Isabella] “What ‘Breakfast Club’ does wrong, is that it is too real. All that shit hits too close to home.”

Isabella: “I don’t believe that. Teenagers want to know that there is someone else like them out there and those characters prove that!”

Lawrence: “Tell ya what, young’n. Let’s have a bet. First song from one’a them movies comes on proves that movie is better. Deal?” [Holds out his hand]

Isabella: [Grabbing his hand, and shaking] “Deal, old man.”

Lawrence: [Lets out a hearty laugh] “Old man, huh? I’m only 45! Not that much time on you, young’n!”

[The clock makes an audible click as hit hits 3:30. Both look at it]

Lawrence: “Just a little bit longer before we get to pass this hellhole off to the night crew.” [He stands and stretches again] “I need some sleep, got another long day tomorrow..”

Isabella: “Oh so do I!” [She sighs] “I had to switch hours with Mark because of my family... I hate working long.”

Lawrence: [Takes a sip of his coffee] “I’m gonna head out on a quick walk round the mall.”

[She looks at Lawrence with defeated eyes. He chuckles as he grabs his stuff and downs the rest of his coffee. As he leaves, Isabella turns back to the monitors, eager to be entertained by their silent actors.]

Scene IV

The clock shows 4:00 PM. Tim McGraw’s “Don’t Take the Girl” plays over the speakers. The two security guards sit at their monitors, blanketed in the yellow light of the ceiling bulbs. After another day of going through the motions, the two are exhausted. Neither seems to be really watching the monitors at this point. The mall-goers on the screens meander around without anyone truly noticing. Isabella looks up at the clock with pleading eyes.

Isabella: “Can it please just be 5:00 already. I’m not even supposed to be working today!”

Lawrence: [Chuckles] “You need to stop taking people’s hours. They’re all lazy bums that won’t cover for you.”

Isabella: [Whining] “But the money.”

Lawrence: “Now don’t go acting like that. Damn well got enough of that from my own kids.”

[Isabella sighs. She begins to wad up pieces of paper and throw them at the clock]

Lawrence: [Looks away from the monitors] “Stop wastin paper, young’n! Why don’tcha go and walk around the mall a bit, waste some time more constructively!”

[Isabella groans as she walks out the door. She makes it seem as though everything takes much more effort than it should. After she leaves, Lawrence goes over to the phone on the wall and picks it up, dialing a mall number]

Lawrence: “It’s me.” [Listens] “Nah it’s a slow day. Nothing much happening.” [Listens]

“Remember what we talked about earlier?” [Listens] “Yeah, want to play that song in a few minutes?” [Listens. The door opens and Isabella enters the room] “Alright, thanks. Bye now.”

[Hangs up]

Isabella: “What was that?”

Lawrence: “Nothin, just gettin them to play my end-of-shift song.” [He sits back down] “Don’t mind it.”

[Isabella sits down with a loud sigh]

Lawrence: “Not a good walk?”

Isabella: [Whining] “I’m just so bored.”

Lawrence: [Sighs] “I’m damn tired of your whining! Why don’t you just head on out and go home early?”

Isabella: [Looks at him] “You mean it? You’ll cover for me!?”

Lawrence: “Get out of here before I change my mind, lazy young’n.”

Isabella: “Thank you so much!” [She jumps up and gets her stuff, but stops at the door. She looks back] “Don’t cheat on the bet, I’ll know.”

[As she leaves, Lawrence smiles and turns towards the monitor. He watches Isabella approach the exit. She stops at the exit to check her bag.]

Lawrence: “Funny little young’n. Doesn’t know her damn movies well.”

[“Don’t You Forget About Me” plays in the distance]

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