

TIMMY: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Written by

Frank MacCrory

Copyright © 2018. This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the author.

fmaccrory@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The check-out area of a crowded store full of working-class CUSTOMERS with baskets or carts full of groceries. Several CASHIERS serve the lines, but not every register is in use. There is no self-check-out or "ten items or less" line.

One customer looks out of place. ERICA MILLER (27), eight or nine months pregnant, dressed professionally, waits impatiently in line with two items in her hands.

She places her jar of pickles and quart of ice cream on the conveyor belt, next to a sign that reads "21 is the legal age. If you weren't born on or before today's date in 2000 then you can't buy or consume alcohol."

Erica glances at her smartwatch when it DINGS.

ERICA

What is it this time?

She pulls out her smartphone to read the message to herself.

ERICA

"Know you just went on maternal leave, but Phil's setting up the summer conference and needs to know your next A.I. project."

She looks up from the phone, sees that she's up in line, but the cashier is checking *her* phone. Erica waits for a long moment then clears her throat.

CASHIER

Sorry, be with you in a sec.

ERICA

I'd like to get home. Today.

The cashier grimaces but puts her phone down.

CASHIER

It's not like the world's going to end.

Cashier scans the items while Erica holds her watch next to the payment terminal. Nothing happens.

Cashier motions to the credit card slot. Erica groans, puts her phone away, digs a card out of her handbag, swipes it, and contorts awkwardly to sign without bumping her belly.

Erica takes her bag and pauses a couple steps from the check-out. She lifts her watch near her face.

ERICA

Send a reply: "Making pick-up-and-walk-out systems cheap enough that any corner store will use 'em."

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

JAKE MILLER (15) walks along the sidewalk, peeks into each storefront he passes. A display on his wrist DINGS, shows "Location tracking engaged" on the screen. It then RINGS, shows "MOM calling..."

ERICA (V.O.)

Why are you in the Upper West Side?
You should be at school.

JAKE

Hey, Mom. We're, uh, on a field trip. Gonna mentor at-risk poor kids in a public school...

The display projects a holographic map of the local area with nearby public schools highlighted. Jake pokes one at random.

Hologram switches to a faux-poster that read "Latest news: Winner of 2036 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award."

JAKE

The place is a mess. They really need our help.

ERICA (V.O.)

Okay, Jake. See you for dinner.
(disconnect)

Jake resumes peeking in storefronts.

He comes to a Frisbee-sized cleaning bot scrubbing the sidewalk. Jake puts his foot in the bot's way. The bot changes course, but Jake blocks it again.

Across the street, Jake sees a stack of drink cases accumulate just inside the window of a supermarket. Sun glare prevents him from seeing who is building the stack, but new cases join it at very regular intervals.

Jake blocks the cleaning bot again then turns to the supermarket. He jogs across the street toward the market entrance.

Several cars - most with no one in the driver's seat, and some completely empty - slow down and swerve to avoid him. An IRATE PASSENGER in one of the cars lowers a window.

IRATE PASSENGER
Stupid jerk!

Jake ignores that person, pulls on shades, and steps inside.

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

The same clean - but not particularly stylish - establishment that Erica visited before. There are no check-out lines, the produce section expanded into that space. The elevator music version of a doom metal song from the Twenty-Teens plays in the background.

A handful of CUSTOMERS - most of them elderly - maneuver carts throughout the store.

Jake glances O.S. toward the window at whoever is stacking the drink cases, then quickly steps into a vacant aisle.

Jake moves down the aisle picking up random items and putting them back onto the wrong shelves. His wrist display CHIMES a "confirm purchase" note each time he picks up an item, and DINGS a "cancel purchase" note each time he puts an item down.

Jake rounds the far end of the aisle, turns back toward the front of the store, and continues mixing up items accompanied by a series of chimes and dings.

Just inside the front window, an ELDERLY WOMAN pushes her cart up to a young man with TIMMY on his store uniform nametag, stacking cases of drinks.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Excuse me, young man...

Timmy puts down his case and turns around. His face is impossibly flawless, his movements unnaturally precise, his expression unconvincingly friendly. He is an android.

TIMMY
Good afternoon. May I help you find anything?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Oh, you're one of those.

Timmy stands motionless, shows no sign of taking offense. The elderly woman sighs.

JAKE

(to himself)

What... a... stiff! That thing must be ten years old.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You have any decent blackberries?

TIMMY

Blackberries are located in the middle of the produce aisle, ma'am, on your right. At this time of year, our blackberries come from N.H.O. Hydroponic Farms in --

ELDERLY WOMAN

So no, then.

She abruptly pushes her cart away, muttering to herself. Timmy resumes stacking.

ELDERLY WOMAN

If I wanted BAD berries I'd just get delivery.

JAKE

(to himself)

Oh, my stiff little jobkiller, I've got much bigger plans for you.

Jake puts his last item on a shelf - DING - then walks behind Timmy toward the produce section.

Timmy turns toward Jake.

TIMMY

Good afternoon. May I help you find anything?

Well behind Jake, a female android in a store uniform labeled TAMMY collects the misplaced items and puts them back in their proper places.

JAKE

Nah, I don't want anything.

Timmy resumes stacking.

Jake stops at a display of apples near the window.

JAKE

Why aren't you helping me with these grapes?

Timmy turns again.

TIMMY

I apologize, I must have missed what you said. Grapes are located at the end of the produce aisle, sir, on your left.

Jake feigns shock.

JAKE

What's with "sir"? You don't know what a girl looks like?

Timmy tilts his head ever so slightly to the right.

TIMMY

My mistake. Grapes are located at the end of the produce aisle, miss, on your left.

JAKE

It's like you can't tell this top is pink.

Jake tugs the sleeve of his green shirt. Lenses inside Timmy's eyes WHIR and adjust rapidly. Jake smiles sadistically.

JAKE

Messed up eyes, explains why all this fruit looks like crap. Besides, I'm already AT the end of the produce aisle, and these bananas are DEFINITELY spoiled.

Timmy looks at the apples, looks at the floor between himself and Jake, looks again at Jake. More whirring.

TIMMY

You appear to be exhibiting confusion. I shall summon an ambulance. Please --

JAKE

I'm allergic to ambulances.

Timmy halts mid-syllable, pauses a moment.

TIMMY

I shall not summon an ambulance.

Jake takes a step closer to Timmy.

The female android Tammy walks up beside Jake.

TAMMY

Good afternoon, is there a problem?

JAKE

No problem, Tommy here's got everything under control.

Tammy tilts her head slightly to the right.

TAMMY

Tommy is in the back unloading a delivery truck.

JAKE

Nothing to see here.

TAMMY

Your satisfaction is very important to us. I can contact the owner directly if --

JAKE

You two are running the same damned program. Let me just finish with the guy I started with. Go help somebody else.

TAMMY

Okay, have a nice day.

Tammy departs, assists another CUSTOMER down the aisle.

Jake turns back to Timmy, fakes wiping sweat from his brow.

JAKE

You should turn down the heat in here, probably why all the fruit went bad.

TIMMY

I apologize if you are uncomfortable. Our indoor climate control is operating nominally. The temperature, humidity and illumination targets have not changed since March First.

JAKE

You've been messing up the produce for weeks? No wonder that old lady was mad at you.

Timmy looks at the produce display with whirring eyes, then looks back at Jake.

Jake closes to within an inch of Timmy's face, smirks.

JAKE

And why are you standing so far away?

More whirring.

TIMMY

I... must have lost track of my exact location. I can speak louder if you prefer.

JAKE

There's a good two meters between us.

Timmy's eyes whir several times, but he doesn't move.

JAKE

Anyway, that fridge behind you looks like it's about to fall on someone.

Timmy turns quickly to address the hazard, accidentally swings through Jake, sends him flying through the store window.

Jake lands on the sidewalk, followed by a shower of broken glass. He is bleeding badly. Both androids rush toward the scene.

TAMMY

Medical emergency! I will summon an ambulance. Please remain calm.

Timmy holds up a hand.

TIMMY

This young lady is allergic to ambulances.

Jake moans in protest, but no intelligible words come out.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Timmy steps through the shattered window to the sidewalk, touches all four corners of Jake's wrist display. It shows "In case of emergency" and a QR code.

Timmy picks up Jake, who groans loudly. Timmy emits the sound of a ringing phone line.

ERICA (V.O.)

Hello?

TIMMY

Mrs. Miller, this is a robot speaking. Urgent message: Your daughter has been injured.

Timmy walks briskly down the sidewalk, Jake yelps with pain at every step.

ERICA (V.O.)

WHAT? How did she get hurt at band practice? Never mind, I'll be right there.

(disconnect)

TIMMY

Please remain calm.

FADE TO BLACK.

Jake groans in agony.

FADE OUT.