

The Volunteer

A Short Script

A weary traveler finds himself unwillingly volunteered off his flight by a persistent airline agent.

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FADE IN:

AIRPORT CHECK-IN COUNTER - DAY

An airline ticket AGENT (woman, 20's or 30's) stands at her post, types on her computer.
A TRAVELER (man, 30's or 40's) comes over with a small suitcase.

TRAVELER
Hey there! How's it goin'?...

AGENT
'Morning...

The traveler gives her his passport, and places his luggage on the weighing scale.

TRAVELER
I just have a carry-on...

The agent examines the passport, then types something on her computer; she looks a bit concerned...

AGENT
Yea... Um... 'Thing is... We had to cancel our previous flight, due to technical problems, and... We're looking for volunteers on this flight, to give up their seats to some of the people waiting...

TRAVELER
Oh, I see... Well, good luck with that!...

AGENT
'See, we're trying to prioritize the families, you know, people with kids, stranded here at the airport... We don't wanna upset the little ones...

TRAVELER
Of course... Understandable... Well, good luck, again!...

AGENT
Volunteers, ideally, would be solo travelers, like yourself, Sir, who wouldn't mind extending their stay one extra night in a five star hotel,
(MORE)

AGENT (cont'd)
at the expense of the airline, of
course...

TRAVELER
Of course... 'Makes sense...

A small beat.

AGENT
You wouldn't happen to wanna
volunteer, would you?...

TRAVELER
Me?!... Oh noooo!... No, no, no, not
interested, no... I prefer to go home
tonight, really, sorry...

AGENT
But... There are little kids who need
to go home too, and they missed their
flight. Don't you care about them?...

TRAVELER
I do, I sympathize very much,
really... But I also sympathize with
myself... 'See, I really need to go
home too...

AGENT
But, they were here before you...

TRAVELER
Yea, and they missed their flight...

AGENT
It's not their fault!

TRAVELER
I know, it's your fault!

AGENT
Sir, allow me to insist...

TRAVELER
You're already insisting!

AGENT
OK, listen, really, between you and
me... What's one more night gonna
change, huh?... Did I mention it was
all expenses paid?...

TRAVELER

Yes, but no, thanks!... I do not wanna give up my seat.

She examines his passport.

AGENT

I see on your passport you've been here for like three weeks; for work I assume?...

TRAVELER

Uh-huh, that's right... I've been working for three weeks straight, and I really, really need to go home now...

AGENT

No problem, you'll get there tomorrow!... Come on, stay the night here, relax, pamper yourself, you've earned it!... The hotel is very highly rated. There's even a swimming pool!...

TRAVELER

I need to go home tonight! At all costs!... It's a "force majeure" thing.

AGENT

Why?... What could you possibly have?...

TRAVELER

It's... It's my girlfriend's birthday.

AGENT

That's not a "force majeure", come on... It's just a... Minor inconvenience...

TRAVELER

Oh, you don't know my girlfriend... She'll be very sad if I missed her birthday!

AGENT

It's fine, we'll send her a bouquet... Plus, you'd be playing hard to get; that'll earn you points with her...

TRAVELER

I don't wanna play hard to get!...
Look! Please! Stop insisting, please!
I do not wanna give up my seat,
period!

AGENT

Sir, I urge you to reconsider...

He thinks for a moment, then it hits him...

TRAVELER

Hold on, wait a minute there, hold
on... Just let's get one thing
straight here: do I actually have the
choice of keeping my seat or not?...

AGENT

Um... Actually, no... Not really,
Sir, no...

TRAVELER

So the "volunteering" part... That's
not really voluntary at all?...

AGENT

No... It's more of a courtesy on our
part...

TRAVELER

So this whole conversation was
pointless! You're just stripping me
from my seat, as simple as that!...
Why didn't you say so before?!...

AGENT

Had you volunteered, Sir, you
wouldn't feel that way... Plus,
volunteers are rewarded with a small
thank you gift: a hundred dollar
discount voucher from any Duty Free
shop. Isn't that cool?

The traveler sighs impatiently, scratches his forehead...

TRAVELER

God Damn it!... Phewwww... I'm gonna
have to explain that to my girlfriend
now!...

AGENT

Oh, she'll get over it...

TRAVELER
I also wanna submit a formal
complaint against your airline!

She hands him a bunch of papers.

AGENT
Of course... There you go, these are
the complaint forms! Just pick one
and fill it...

He takes one form, examines it...

TRAVELER
But... This one is already filled
out!...

She takes back the papers.

AGENT
Oops, sorry! My bad!... I'll find you
a blank one...

She shuffles through the papers...

TRAVELER
Oh, I see you take those very
seriously...

AGENT
Uh-huh...

She finally finds him a blank form and hands it to him with
a pen. He starts filling it out... Then he stops.

TRAVELER
You know, you guys got it all
wrong!... You should have kept the
families in here, and let us, single
travelers, go home!

AGENT
The policy of the airline has always
been women and children first, in
case of emergencies... It's very
selfish of you to think otherwise,
Sir...

TRAVELER
Well that doesn't apply in this
case...

AGENT
Really?... Why not?

TRAVELER

Think about it... A family traveling together is obviously here for fun! Like on a big Disneyland trip. Give them one more day at your hotel "with a swimming pool", they'll be ecstatic!... Whereas us, workers, we're either going to work, and therefore shouldn't miss an eventual business meeting, or we're going back from work, and cannot stand one more minute away from home... Either way, we should go first!...

AGENT

Um... I think you may have a point there...

TRAVELER

Really?... So can I keep my seat?!

AGENT

No... But I'm gonna mention this in our lessons learned report. It helps the commercial team optimize their sales, you know... Thank you for the insight!

TRAVELER

(Dryly)

Glad to be of service...

AGENT

Of course...

(she types on her
computer)

So, how would you like your room?... With a view on the patio, with the swimming pool, or on the front yard?... Did I mention the hotel has a swimming pool?...

TRAVELER

Whatever, lady... You know, this is a blatant case of class segregation...

AGENT

What?... How is that a class segregation thing?

TRAVELER

As always, rich people get the first spot, and us working guys, the

(MORE)

TRAVELER (cont'd)
second... Yea, just shove 'em all on
the next airplane, who cares!...

AGENT
Who said anything about anyone being
rich or poor?

TRAVELER
Do you know any poor people who
travel with their kids?

She thinks...

AGENT
Um... Refugees?...

TRAVELER
This is a prejudice against the
working class!

AGENT
Don't tell me about the working
class!... What do you think I am,
upper class?... 'Think I'm doing this
for fun?! Huh?

TRAVELER
Um... Well...

AGENT
You think I'm doing this just to
dress up like this, for fun?... To
turn on men who have a fetish for
hostesses? Is that what you think?...

TRAVELER
Um... I think they're called flight
attendants now...

AGENT
Whatever!... I'm just doing my job,
Sir, in order to remain in that
working class you seem to despise so
much, and not fall lower from that,
like in the jobless, bum class!...
Consider yourself lucky to have a
job, Sir.

He softens up.

TRAVELER
Look... Um... Obviously, we started
off the wrong foot... Um... I'll take
(MORE)

TRAVELER (cont'd)
that room with a swimming pool view
now... Yea, why not?...

A notification beeps on her computer. She gazes at it.

AGENT
Wait a minute!...

She types something on her computer...

TRAVELER
What?...

AGENT
A spot just opened up! I had a last
minute single-seat cancellation! I
can squeeze you in!... How cool is
that?

TRAVELER
Really?...

AGENT
Yea! Lucky you!...
(she hands him his
passport with a
ticket)
Here's your boarding pass, Sir!
Quickly!

TRAVELER
Thanks, but...
(he looks at his
watch)
The plane leaves in four minutes...
Do I still have the time to?...

AGENT
If you start running, yes!...

TRAVELER
OK, great!...
(He grabs hastily his
suitcase, looks
around...)
Um... Where's my gate?...

She points him in one direction.

AGENT
OK, you have to go all the way
through Hall One, this way, then pass
the first checkpoint; and then, you
have to cross all the way through
(MORE)

AGENT (cont'd)
Hall Two, pass the second checkpoint,
and there you get to the boarding
gates. Yours is number twenty-two.
That's the last one to your right...
'Can't miss it!

TRAVELER
Um... OK... Thanks, bye!...

He runs away as fast as he can...

She types calmly at her computer, but then notices something
on her desk...

AGENT
Oh!
(she holds up some
brochure)
Your discount voucher, Sir!...

THE END.