

FREEDOM CORPS.

EPISODE 002

"I LOVE THE SMELL OF NEPHI IN THE MORNING"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HUDSON STREET OFFICE - DAY

To establish. It's early morning, the birds are chirping.

INT. HUDSON STREET - CONTINUOUS

HARRIS joins JON in the warehouse breakfast nook for their morning brew. His hair is mussed, as if he just woke up. He pours himself a cup.

HARRIS

Oh thank god.

(sips luxuriously)

I never thought I would like coffee this much. Now I can't live without it.

JON

I thought Mormons weren't allowed to drink caffeine.

HARRIS

I'm not a Mormon! Goddammit, I told you! My parents were Mormons.

JON

I heard you were a Jack Mormon. Closet Mormon. They're the worst kind.

HARRIS

I'm not a Mormon. I'm a me-man. Me. That's all that matters.

JON

Okay, fine, fine. Hey could you read this for me?

(Jon hands Harris a blank piece of paper. Harris looks at it in confusion.)

Eh, you might need to use these glasses.

Jon hands him a pair of x-ray specs.

HARRIS

Very funny. Look, I'm not a Mormon. I was never a Mormon. I mean I went to tabernacle when I was a kid, but I had no say in that. I don't believe in the prophet Moroni or any of that garbage. I think the Mormon Church is an overbearing corporation that's every bit as bad as the...

Suddenly, a BOOMING VOICE and a light from the rafters blasts Harris.

BOOMING VOICE

Harris! I am the prophet Moroni! Why have you forsaken me? Listen to my teachings, and learn from me!

HARRIS

(spits out his coffee. Tosses the cup.)
Holy Shit! I... I mean, gosh! I didn't mean it, I...
(he kneels under the light)
Oh god, please forgive me...!

The light snaps off. DAVE comes down from the catwalk holding a megaphone.

DAVE

You were right, Jon, these "Omnipotent Voice" megaphones are going to work great for crowd control during our next neighborhood disaster drill. Look how well it worked on Harris!

HARRIS

(slumps over on the floor)
Oh, you're a bastard. I'm going to kill you for this.

JON

(looks down at Harris, still sipping his coffee.)
Don't worry, your secret's safe with me. But if think you can date both Val and Lisa at the same time you're out of your mind.

EXT - SOUTH CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Harris, Dave and Jon, are at the door of a townhouse. They carry backpacks and clipboards.

HARRIS

Now, be cool guys. This is our first neighborhood canvassing for T.I.P.S. so I want to make a good impression.

JON

Do we have to make an acronym for everything? It's demeaning. If we can't say Terrorist Information Provider System, how do they expect us to collect T.I.P.S.?

HARRIS

I don't make this crap up, you know. It's in the handbook. Did you read the handbook.

JON

I'm not really into the bookish religions. The Bible, the book of Mormon...

HARRIS

Please don't start with that again, I just want...

DAVE

(rings the doorbell)
We're down, Joseph Smith, don't get your holy underwear in a wad.

FREEZE FRAME - INSERT TITLE

"JOSEPH SMITH WAS THE FOUNDER OF MORMANISM"

BACK TO SCENE

HARRIS

Call me that again and I'll punch you in the mouth.

DAVE

Ooh, tough guy! What's the big deal? I mean, we're just out here meeting the folks, it's nothing...

The door opens and ALLY AHSRAF, a very hot Arabic chick is standing there, clad in summer clothes and looking gorgeous.

DAVE

(continuing)
... serious.

JON

Damn.

HARRIS

Uhm... this is supposed to be the residence of Faris Ashraf?

ALLY

That's right, I'm Ally Ashraf. Faris is my father.

HARRIS

(at a loss for words)
Okay.

Dave steps in front of him.

DAVE

(to Harris)
Simmer down there Moroni, and let a real man handle this.

FREEZE FRAME - INSERT TITLE

"MORONI WAS A MORMON PROPHET WHO SUPPOSEDLY BURIED
SACRED RECORDS OF HIS PEOPLE IN THE HILL CUMORAH IN 421 AD"

BACK TO SCENE

DAVE

(continuing)

Ms. Ashraf, we're here on behalf of Freedom Corps as a part of the T.I.P.S. initiative, are you familiar with the program?

ALLY

(She leans saucily on the doorframe.)

You boys wanna come in for a minute and explain it?

DAVE

A minute is all it'll take and we'll be out of your hair.

INT - ASHRAF HOME - DAY

Dave has a dry erase board set up. Ally, Harris and Jon sit on the couch while he talks.

DAVE

You see, Ally, it's like this. Guys like us go around the neighborhood and make contact with... extraordinary individuals such as yourself.

He draws two circles, labels them "us" and "you"

DAVE

(continuing)

We draw you into our "circle of confidence", you see this?

He draws several more circles and connects them to the circle labeled "us."

DAVE

(continuing)

Now that you're in bed with us, so to speak, you keep your ears below the belt, and if you smell anything suspicious, you come back and give us an oral report. Are you with me so far?

ALLY

I'm on the edge of my seat.

DAVE

Now what we have here is a two-pronged attack. You responding to us is only step one. In step two we teach you how to set up and manipulate your own anti-terror network.

Dave draws six circles and connects them to the "you" circle. Then does the same for all the other circles until the board is a mess of circles.

DAVE

(continuing)

Do you understand how this works, Ally? If each of these circles gets only six circles of their own, we reach a kind of critical mass with all this information flowing...right to the top.

Dave draws arrows up the chain and little icons like fluid spewing from the "us" circle.

DAVE

(continuing)

And they can get more than six. This is how we apply the massage oil of intelligence to the knotted muscles of our terrorism problem.

ALLY

That sounds really exciting. When can we get started?

DAVE

Whenever you're ready.

Ally gets up and walks invitingly down the hall.

ALLY

Why don't you come back to my room, Dave, and I'll tell you everything I know.

(She pauses, and looks back)

And if you all want to compare notes together later, ... I'm okay with that too.

Dave follows her eagerly.

DAVE

Boys, I think I'm gonna like this job after all.

INT - ASHRAF HOME - LATER

Harris and Jon are sitting on the couch. Jon looks at his watch.

JON

They've been in there a long time.

HARRIS

She must have a lot of information to divulge.

JON

Are you kidding me? You understand what's going on in there, don't you? He's monopolizing our contact.

HARRIS

Monopolizing?

JON

As in Free Parking! Community Chest!

HARRIS

Take a ride on the Reading?

JON

Yeah!

HARRIS

Go directly to jail?

JON

Yeah!

HARRIS

This is a problem. We're a minor anti-terror group, not a minor dating service.

A car door slams outside. Harris jumps.

HARRIS
(continuing)
What's that?

Jon goes to the window and looks out.

JON
It's the Bad News Bears, and Dave's in
bed with Goldilocks.

HARRIS
This is a problem.

The door opens. FARIS ASHRAF comes in, a huge gruff Arabic man. He stops, eyeing Harris and Jon.

HARRIS
Um, hello, sir. You may be wondering why
we're in your house...

FARIS
Who the hell are you?

HARRIS
That too. Um, my name is Harris, and
this is my associate Jon...

FARIS
Where's my daughter?

HARRIS
Um... this is embarrassing...

Faris storms down the hall.

FARIS
Ally?

There is a beat of uncomfortable silence before he storms back to the front room carrying an M-60 machine gun.

FARIS
Where is she?

JON

Woah! Hold on a second, she's not back there with Dave?

HARRIS

That's good!
(confused)
I mean, wait a second...

FARIS

No, that is not good...for you! Who's Dave? Where's my daughter?!

HARRIS

This is a problem.

INT - ASHRAF HOME, BACK ROOM - DAY

Faris has tied Harris and John up, and is tightening the ropes. Crates of grenades are stacked floor to ceiling around them. He seems satisfied, and leaves the room.

HARRIS

At no point in his "interrogation" did Dave notice he was surrounded by an ammunition dump?

JON

Probably before she captured him and took him to see her cell leader!

HARRIS

I can't believe we got captured by terrorists.

JON

Look at it this way... we flushed one out on our first try.

HARRIS

Let's not mince words, this is a complete embarrassment to the program no matter which way you look at it.

JON

So what are we gonna do?

HARRIS

Well, there's only one thing we can do. Call Aunt Sally for backup. He's our project leader, surely he can bail us out.

JON

You don't want to just call the police?

HARRIS

I don't think they can handle something like this. Better cut to the quick.

JON

But we're talking about a guy who went ballistic on a pastrami sandwich with no onions. He's as likely to blow up the block as rescue us.

HARRIS

Can you reach my phone?

JON

Sure, hold on...

Harris rolls over and Jon leans over him, digging in his back pocket with his teeth. Just then, Faris comes back around the corner.

FARIS

What are you doing?

JON

(trying to spit the pocket flap out of his mouth.)
Uh... nofing.

FARIS

Moral degenerates! It's your kind of filth that is sending this world straight to hell. Well go on then, revel in your abomination. God will punish you according to his will.

He storms off.

HARRIS

Terrorist bums. They're always trying to

take the moral high ground.

JON

Never mind that... here's the phone.

Harris dials with his nose.

HARRIS

C'mon, c'mon... pick up. Aunt Sally!
We've been captured by terrorists. Yeah,
and they've got Dave. I don't know what
they did with him. No, it's the first
house on the route. Yeah, hurry!

Faris comes in and sees Harris on the phone. He steps on the phone, smashing it.

FARIS

Calling for backup, huh? Well it won't
do you any good. I've got some backup
of my own on the way.

We HEAR a KNOCK on the door. We hear DETECTIVE GORSKI'S VOICE.

GORSKI (OS)

Open up! Police!

JON

It's the police! Finally!

Faris leaves. We HEAR the SOUND of a DOOR OPENING. Faris returns, with OFFICERS KOWALSKI, NOWAK, and DETECTIVE GORSKI. They are somewhat reminiscent of the Marx brothers. Kowalski wears a trench coat.

FARIS

Come on in, Officers.

GORSKI

I'm detective Gorski. These are officers
Kowalski and Nowak.

(indicates the others)

Kowalski doesn't say much, and Nowak
usually says too much. Are these the
perpetrators?

HARRIS

Wait... what? We're the ones that need help! Aren't you gonna untie us?

NOWAK

How about this: we can take you downtown and book you before or after you tell us what you did with this good citizen's daughter.

GORSKI

You may not've heard, but we don't take kindly to terrorists in this country.

HARRIS

Now hold on a second, he's the terrorist! We're with Freedom Corps!

GORSKI

(to Faris)

What's he talking about?

FARIS

I don't know anything about Freedom Corps. All I know is these terrorist bastards abducted my daughter.

HARRIS

What? We didn't touch you daughter!

JON

Well, I'm pretty sure Dave was going to give it a go, but I don't...

GORSKI

Kowalski, rope off her room and call forensics. We're gonna hang these pervs up to dry.

Kowalski leaves. There is a beat while everyone looks at each other. Then a tear gas canister crashes in through the window.

GORSKI

(coughing)

What in the...?!

Everyone begins to cough. AUNT SALLY crashes in through the

skylight, wearing a gas mask and carrying an assault rifle.

AUNT SALLY

Everybody Freeze! Drop you weapons! You too, officers.

Faris and the police drop their guns and put their hands in the air. Aunt Sally pulls off his gas mask revealing his face.

AUNT SALLY

These boys are working for me, and I can't have you taking them off under false pretenses, regardless of how our different establishments may feel about each other.

JON

(to himself)

I should've known it was gonna go down like this. Does that guy never use doors?

AUNT SALLY

No, that's the first thing they expect!

HARRIS

(to Jon)

Good hearing too!

GORSKI

I don't know who you think you are, but these terrorists are coming with us. You know you can't get away with this.

AUNT SALLY

I think you've got it backwards here. And I don't think the police are really working with the terrorists, so we're going to sort things out... my way!

GORSKI

I can't believe the terrorists got the drop on us.

AUNT SALLY

Yes, it doesn't speak well of the C.P.D. We'll get it all sorted out later at your inquest. But for now...

NOWAK

(to Aunt Sally)

He was talking about you, you imbecile!

AUNT SALLY

Excuse me? I'm as American as capitalism! You see this patch?

(jabs at the patch on his shoulder)

That's a screaming eagle, my friend!

While Aunt Sally is distracted, Kowalski comes back from the hallway, motioning in frustration at the phone because he is incapable of speech. Everyone sees him but Aunt Sally, who is on a tirade. Kowalski, seeing the situation, puts down the phone and sneaks up behind Aunt Sally.

HARRIS

Aunt Sally?

NOWAK

It does look a little like the post office logo, doesn't it?

AUNT SALLY

No it doesn't! Don't sass me, son, I was in the military.

GORSKI

Yeah? What branch?

AUNT SALLY

Um, can't tell you that. But that's beside the point!

Kowalski takes a frying pan from his trench coat and prepares to brain Aunt Sally.

JON

Aunt Sally you might want to...

AUNT SALLY

What?!

GORSKI

Kolowski, now!

AUNT SALLY

Eh..?

Kowalksi swings, and the screen goes black as we HEAR a RESOUNDING KLONK!

INT - ASHRAF HOME, BACK ROOM - LATER

Aunt Sally, cuffed with a plastic tie, lies face down next to Harris and Jon.

AUNT SALLY

Well, sorry boys, this isn't going exactly as I'd hoped... say, this is a pretty nice stockpile you've got here, Faris. Where'd you get 'em?

FARIS

Surplus from Afghanistan. They're disarmed... I was gonna make a sculpture out of 'em...

AUNT SALLY

Oh, you were in the 'Stan, too?

FARIS

Yeah, with the Marines. Who were you with?

AUNT SALLY

Um, can't tell you that either.

Just then, Dave and Ally walk in from the hallway, and stop short, shocked by the scene.

ALLY

Daddy? What's going on?

Faris runs to her, grabs her by the shoulders, and lifts her up.

FARIS

Honey, where were you? I was so worried!

ALLY

We were just at a café down the street. We came back when we saw the fire truck.

He sets her down, stern now.

FARIS

Couldn't you have left me a note or something?

ALLY

No, we had to climb out the window. Dave here's kind of cute, but we had to ditch his loser friends.

(she gestures at Harris and Jon)

DAVE

(shrugs at them)

Sorry, guys.

HARRIS

(looks disgustedly at Dave.)

Oh, he's not our friend.

Aunt Sally laughs heartily from his position on the floor.

AUNT SALLY

So this is all just a big misunderstanding, right?

Officer Nowak comes in and whispers to Detective Gorski.

NOWAK

Sir? I just got a call from headquarters. Some G-man from real high up says we gotta let these guys go. We can't hold 'em.

GORSKI

(disgusted noise)

Well, I guess there's no lasting harm done. And I don't really wanna explain all this in a report, so...

INSERT

They cut Aunt Sally's cuffs.

BACK TO SCENE

FARIS

Wait a second, what about my window? And

my skylight?

ALLY

(throwing her arms around him)
Oh daddy, if you hadn't overreacted,
none of this would have happened, would
it?

FARIS

I suppose... I have you back and that's
all that matters.
(to the others)
But I better not see you boys around
here again.

Aunt Sally gets to his feet.

AUNT SALLY

(rubbing his wrists)
Well, looks like my job is done here.

INT. ASHRAF HOME, FRONT ROOM - DAY

Aunt Sally runs dramatically to the window and tries to jump
out, but it's barred. Ouch. Dazed, he staggers sheepishly to
the door.

AUNT SALLY

Okay, maybe just this once.

Detective Gorski and Officer Nowak head to the door.

GORSKI

I guess we'll just be going then.

Kowalski shrugs and follows them out.

HARRIS

Right.

Harris, Dave and Jon head out the door.

ALLY

(blows Dave a kiss)
See ya around, Dave.

Dave pretends to swoon.

EXT - CHICAGO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Harris Dave and Jon are walking down the street to the next house.

DAVE

So, do you think she'll be a good contact?

JON

Clearly she already knows how to set up and manipulate an anti-terror network just fine.

HARRIS

(to Dave)

You're the dirtiest kid I know. I don't see why girls always fall for your act.

DAVE

Girls love a bad boy, Nephi, I'm telling you.

FREEZE FRAME - INSERT TITLE

"NEPHI WAS ANOTHER MORMON PROPHET, WHO THEY SAY LIVED AROUND 600 BC AND WAS THE INVENTOR OF ORANGE SODA. IF YOU DON'T THINK THESE MORMON JOKES ARE FUNNY, YOU'RE GOING TO HELL. YOU AND ALL YOUR ANCESTORS."

BACK TO SCENE

HARRIS

Would you stop with the Mormon cuts? Just because I'm from Salt Lake City does not make me a Mormon.

DAVE

Mormon by association.

JON

Look, I'm in need of a stiff drink

before we go any further. Can we stop off at a bar or something?

DAVE

I just had coffee.

(beat)

I'm hoping we get some real action at the next house. Maybe a lonely housewife, or something.

HARRIS

Don't make me kill you, Dave.

DAVE

Okay Harris, maybe we should take a break. You can get an orange soda or something, research your genealogy.

HARRIS

That's it, I'm going to kill you and baptize you posthumously, just for spite!

Harris chases Dave down the sidewalk. Jon saunters indulgently behind them.

FADE OUT

THE END