

Look Who's Comin' To The Zoom

A 10 Minute (Zoom) Play

by
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ZOOM BOX #1: BOB and LORETTA. Bob is a white guy in his mid 50s and Loretta is a white housewife in her early 50s. Bob wears a red “MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN” hat and a t-shirt with the American flag on it; Loretta is dressed like a suburban housewife. Their home is in central Florida and fits that description... of a house in central Florida, owned by two Christian Conservatives.

ZOOM BOX #2: KATIE, a white girl in her mid 20s, in an apartment in Mid-City, New Orleans. She’s what some would consider a “radical”; the term “Aggressive Progressive” best fits her personality and her apartment also fits the description (banners, posters, paintings, BLM protest signs, stickers, furniture, etc. align with her “cultural” aesthetic). She is the daughter of Bob and Loretta and is, therefore, originally from central Florida.

ZOOM BOX #3: Bob’s mother, Katie’s GRANDMA, 70s, lies in a hospital bed in the living room of her home. An HISPANIC NURSE, 30s (*speaks Spanish*), sits in a chair and mostly surfs on her cell phone the entire chat. Grandma is in and out of sleep most of the chat... oxygen mask in clear view, tubes everywhere, heart monitor, etc.

ZOOM BOX #4: BILLY and TAMMY. Billy is Loretta’s baby brother and Tammy is his second wife, living in Texas near Houston. Billy’s in his early 40s and Tammy is in her early 30s. Billy’s a bit of roughneck with tattoos and a Libertarian streak and Tammy is... “very” Texas, but slightly “alternative” (*however one wishes to interpret that*) and also “very” pregnant. If there were books in their house, Ayan Rand’s “Atlas Shrugged” would be among them.

ZOOM BOX #5: LEANNE, Billy’s first child from his first wife, a few years younger than Katie, and falls on the political spectrum somewhere between Katie and Bob (*but could actually care less*); she lives in Chicago, but maintains the Texas drawl, and her apartment looks like a fresh out of college woman just starting out in the world.

ZOOM BOX #6: Leanne's mystery boyfriend...

For the purpose of this play, what's displayed inside the Zoom boxes will be described as follows:

ZOOM BOX #1: BOB and LORETTA

Bob's the Admin and, therefore, in full control of the chat.

(Boxes will be popping up one by one throughout the play as more people enter the chat. First to appear:)

ZOOM BOX #2: KATIE

BOB
Hey, there she is--!

LORETTA
Hi, honey--!

BOB
It's the "*radical*" revolutionary!

LORETTA
Bob, stop. Katie's just going through a phase.

KATIE
Who I am is not a phase, Mom.

BOB
How's the looting going, kiddo? Make any new friends with those an-tee-*fah* terrorists?

KATIE
It's pronounced: "anti-*FAH*", Dad. It means: anti-fascist. Ya know, what your grandpa was when he fought the Nazis--

LORETTA
Honey, did you get that care package I sent you?

KATIE
Yeah, thanks. But, why would you send me packaged gumbo? I live in New Orleans.

ZOOM BOX #3: GRANDMA and HISPANIC NURSE

LORETTA
I saw it online. I immediately thought of you, honey.

KATIE
And, yet another Bible was a... special *treat* as well--

LORETTA

Well, I'm sure all the churches are closed where you are because of this stupid, fake, Chinese Virus... and because those New Orleans' Democrats hate God--

KATIE

Aaand, I haven't been in a church in years. I keep telling you: stop sending me Bibles...

Loretta is visually upset...

GRANDMA

(mumbles) All praise to God most high.

HISPANIC NURSE

(still all about her cell phone) *Alabado sea Jesús.*

BOB

Kiddo, don't disrespect your mother's thoughtfulness. See what it does to her?

KATIE

Oh, Jesus.

BOB

And do not disrespect the Lord! You might want to crack open one of those Bibles. Give yourself at least a fighting chance at salvation. Speaking of which: you got a day and a half left before our annual daddy/daughter weekend. Jags-Colts. Home field advantage.

Grandma mumbles some more...

KATIE

(focused on Grandma) I don't think I'm gonna make it this year, Daddy. I mean, I do wanna be there with you for kick off. If not for the Jags, at least the Noles first home game *(sense of urgency)* is Grandma okay?!

BOB

She's fine.

GRANDMA

(sits up; immediately lucid) It's just a head cold!

BOB

Just a cold. She'll be fine--

LORETTA

She'll be fine, dear. Your grandma's a fighter.

Grandma has a coughing jag. Hispanic Nurse puts the oxygen mask over her face, while still focused on scrolling through her cell phone, unfazed.

KATIE

Has she at least gotten a COVID test--?

BOB

It's a hoax--!

LORETTA

It's a hoax--!

BOB

Fake news!

LORETTA

Fake news, dear.

BOB

Tests are inaccurate, anyway.

KATIE

How would you even know?

BOB

No one is even dying of this fake virus.

LORETTA

Underlying conditions.

KATIE

Yes! And Grandma definitely has one! She's immunity compromised, one hundred percent! Please tell me you're still wearing your masks when you go to the Walmart--

LORETTA

We don't go out any more--

BOB

Those stupid mask Nazis--!

LORETTA

Haven't left the house in days.

BOB

They can rot in hell, far as I'm concerned!

LORETTA

Don't get your father started, honey. It's very upsetting to him. There was an... incident.

KATIE

What happened?!

LORETTA

It's nothing, dear--

BOB

We lost our dang country to these mask Nazis, is what happened!

LORETTA

Your father just had a slight disagreement with the Walmart staff.

BOB

That manager's lucky I'm a church-going man, so help me God!

KATIE

Daddy, tell me you did not get into a fight at Walmart that's going to end up on YouTube.

LORRETTA

Of course not, dear. You would have seen it by now.

ZOOM BOX #4: BILLY and TAMMY

BOB

Hey, there he is!

LORETTA

There's my baby brother! And the baby
on the way!

BILLY

(rubbing Tammy's belly) Good news: we're still alive and kickin' here in *Tejas*!

TAMMY

Kickin' like a Bronco!

BILLY

Kickin' like a punter. You see that game?!

TAMMY

Heya, Katie.

KATIE

Hey, Tammy. Wow, looks like you're ready to pop out the entire COVID Generation!

BOB

I sat down to watch yesterday's game. Two anthems?! Two?! A Black People Anthem?! And all the going back into the locker rooms, the kneeling, the holding hands, along with the other stuff -- those bleeding heart commercials!

Grandma mumbles. Hispanic Nurse, still with the cell phone, places her hand on top of Grandma's hand.

Meanwhile, Katie's eye rolling is off the chart, about to stab her eyes out!

BOB

Not one mention of today -- which was only hours away! No moment of silence of those who died. No remembrance. Nothing! It was a disgrace! I got sick to my stomach.

LORETTA

Honey, let's not talk politics. It just ends up making you upset.

BILLY

Politics? He's just talkin' football, sissy! Was a great game though.

BOB

Oh, hell of a game. For sure.

KATIE

Yet, you kept watching.

BOB

Of course. Why would I ever turn off a football game? That would be *un-American*.

No one notices a new arrival...

ZOOM BOX #5: LEANNE

Leanne hangs out for a minute waiting for her family to notice her...

They try to talk over each other -- but, it's a Zoom chat...

KATIE

Like protesting the treatment of Black people? Also *un-American*--?

BILLY

That didn't take long, now did it? Good to see you're still a village burner, Katie--

LORETTA

Can we please not talk politics--?!

BOB

Speaking of village burning liberals: when's the "gender reveal" party--?

TAMMY

We got our fireworks out in the garage just waitin' to go!

BILLY

Right?! Them libs out in California don't know how to aim.

BILLY

We'll show 'em how to avoid the trees!

BOB

First they came for our fireworks, and we did nothing--

LEANNE

Hi! Hello?!

LORETTA

Oh my gosh! Leanne all the way from Chicago!

BOB

Hey, there she is!

BILLY

Hey, it's my baby girl!

TAMMY

Sweetie, you been there the whole time?

LEANNE

Sure have... "sweetie." Guess ya got baby blindness, huh?

Tammy fake smiles at the shot from her step-daughter.

KATIE

What up, cuz?

LEANNE

Glad you're here, cuz. 'Cause you're about to meet my new man.

TAMMY

Oh-my-god! Leanne's new beau's about to show his face?!

BILLY

'Bout time we get to meet this man of mystery. Is he there with you now?

LEANNE

No. He's visiting his family in Schaumburg. His grandma's sick.

Grandma let's out a loud moan. Hispanic Nurse stands up and checks on her...

LEANNE

I sent him the Zoom link.

KATIE

Schaumburg, huh? Did he go to Northwestern? Let me guess: investment banker.

LEANNE

Close. Wealth management.

KATIE

Of course.

LEANNE

He's originally from your neck of the woods.

KATIE

He's from New Orleans?

LEANNE

Close. Mississippi.

KATIE

Really? Huh?

BOB

Ah, an Ole Miss boy. Okay.

LORETTA

Well, we just can't wait to meet him!

TAMMY

Absolutely! We just can't wait, can we honey?

BILLY

No, baby. We just can't wait.

Grandma let's out another moan.

BOB

See, mamma's excited as well. Where's he at?

LEANNE

He just texted. Having a hard time getting a connection--

KATIE

Well, what's his name?

TAMMY

Dwayne.

BILL

Like the Rock?

LEANNE

I mean, kinda...

ZOOM BOX #6: DWAYNE, a Black male (20s or 30s).

All activity freezes as the family absorbs the impact of Leanne's new boyfriend; the look of absolute shock registers on the faces of Bob, Loretta, Billy and Tammy...

Katie mutes her microphone and bursts into hysterical laughter; her video monitor turns off...

Grandma instantly sits up and leans forward to get a closer look, then turns to Hispanic Nurse--

GRANDMA

Something's gone wrong with the tv... there's some colored boy on the tv now...

Grandma's microphone is immediately muted with a caption that reads: "Administrator has disabled chats for this user."

Katie's back on the screen, smiling from ear to ear.

KATIE

Well hellooo, Duh-Wayne!

DWYNE

It's pronounced: "d'Wayne." Just like John Wayne, but with a sharp "D" in front.

KATIE

Oh. O-kay?

DWAYNE

(beyond polite Southern gentleman) Gosh, it really is nice to see all of your faces. Leanne has told me so much about y'all.

Grandma, throughout the following, tries to make sense of what's happening and frantically speaks to her nurse, though her sound is muted...

KATIE

I'll bet she has--

BILLY

Don't believe everything my baby girl says. She sometimes has a hard time... telling the truth--

TAMMY

I disagree with that, strongly. Leanne has no problem telling me exactly what she thinks--

LORETTA

It sure is nice to finally meet you... "D"-Wayne. Leanne tells us you're from Mississippi.

DWAYNE

That's right. Proud son of the South. Even got my Stars and Bars sticker on my truck, and every Lynyrd Skynyrd album fired up on Spotify to prove it.

KATIE

Wait, what--?

BOB

You're a Skynyrd fan? You don't say.

DWAYNE

Absolutely. I'm what ya call: "old school." Allman Brothers. Molly Hatchet. .38 Special. Rossington Collins. Marshall Tucker--

BILLY

Okay, there ya go! He just rattled off my top five in one shot.

DWAYNE

(re: Bob's hat) And I see Leanne's uncle understands the direction the country needs to go in.

Bob's eyes light up...

BOB

Are... you referring to what's on my head right now?

DWAYNE

Yes sir, I am. And in honor of today, I feel it imperative to continue the current leadership should, God forbid, some Middle Eastern terrorists attack America again.

KATIE

Is this happening right now--?!

Katie's microphone is immediately muted with a caption that reads: "Administrator has disabled chats for this user"

BOB

Katie, learn to accept people for who they are! That's exactly what I've been saying, Dwayne!

LORRETTE

That's what Bob says every day, Dwayne.

Katie continues to try to speak throughout the following; her exasperation escalating...

Meanwhile, Grandma's condition has grown increasingly worse, to the point where it appears as if she may be in dire need of more extensive medical care than her nurse -- who is as frantic as Katie is trying to get their attention -- can manage on her own... as the family continues to ignore Grandma's worsening condition.

BILLY

Looks like ya picked ya-self a winner, baby girl.

TAMMY

And, he sure is handsome as well.

LEANNE

Relax, Tammy.

TAMMY

I'm just sayin', girl. We finally have somethin' in common.

BILLY

Well, not exactly. I mean--

TAMMY

You know what I mean.

DWAYNE

I think we should observe a moment of silence for those we lost on this day 19 years ago.

BOB

I completely agree! That's *exactly* what was missing from yesterday's football game. No disrespect to... you know, other things happening--

DWAYNE

I completely agree. I dislike any show of disrespect to our flag and what it stands for.

Katie completely loses it, and starts banging her head on her desk... until her Zoom video disappears.

DWAYNE

I don't know if y'all are familiar with Candace Owens who pointed out that all these football players kneeling are doing it for the all mighty dollar.

BOB

I am *very* familiar with Ms. Owens.

LORETTA

Bob is in love with Candace Owens.

BOB

Oh hush, Loretta--

LORETTA

Well, it's true--

Tammy clutches her stomach as if she could pop at any moment. Billy and Tammy's Zoom chat goes mute.

Bob and Loretta continue to engage with Dwayne as Billy and Tammy's behavior grows more and more frantic, prepping a run to the hospital... until their Zoom video disappears.

At this point, Grandma looks as if she's on her last legs; while still on mute, Hispanic Nurse frantically looks to the camera in a desperate plea for some sort of help.

BOB

I just like that she is so well spoken, and really knows how to own the Libs.

DWAYNE

She does just that, and speaks out about the police being used as scapegoats for the real crisis in this country: illegal immigration.

BOB

Exactly!

BOB

Build that wall!

DWAYNE

Build that wall!

Hispanic Nurse, who has been desperately trying to get their attention -- takes a beat, ignores Grandma's situation, and appears to be cursing at Bob and Dwayne, in Spanish, while Grandma's heart monitor flatlines... until the Zoom video disappears.

Zoom boxes #1, #5 & #6 remain as the sound of constant text messages coming in can be heard. Loretta looks around--

LORETTA

Is that my phone?

LEANNE

Ugh! No, Aunt Loretta. It's Katie blowing up my cell. Y'all continue. You seem like you're really enjoying yourselves.

Leanne's Zoom video disappears.

LORETTA

I wonder what Katie wants?

BOB

Does it even matter?

BOB

Now listen, Dwayne. You should come visit us for Thanksgiving this year.

LORETTA

Is something burning? Do you smell that?

DWAYNE

I would like that, sir. I would be on the first plane to Florida with Leanne--

LORETTA

Oh no! I forgot I put cookies in the oven...!

Loretta springs up and rushes out of Zoom frame...

DWAYNE

But, because some want to take our freedoms away, we have to wear these god-forsaken masks, and I will not sit on an airplane for that long wearing a freedom killer.

Now all that's left is Bob and Dwayne...

BOB

Son, you are just the kind of American that makes this country great again.

DWAYNE

Why thank you, sir. The feeling is mutual. And speaking of mutual: how are your mutual accounts? Are you diversifying?

BOB

Am I... you mean my stock portfolio?

DWAYNE

That is precisely what I mean. An intelligent man such as yourself should really consider diversifying your portfolio. It's never too early to start spending more time on the golf course. I'd like to talk to you about some investment opportunities, if you're interested.

BOB

Well, as a matter of fact -- indeed I am! You know what, Dwayne? This looks like it could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Out of frame of Bob's Zoom chat can be heard--

LORETTA (OFF STAGE)

I've burned the cookies! Oh dear God -- now the kitchen is on fire! Bob, the kitchen walls are burning! Where's the extinguisher!!! It's spreading...!!!

Bob continues to smile at Dwayne, almost as if he's falling in love, while ignoring Loretta who continues to scream as their house begins to burn...

Blackout.

END OF PLAY