

One Screwy Day 6 (Based on a True Story)

by

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Captain Mental and Constable Morgan are standing in a passenger train carriage. It rocks a little as it speeds on the tracks, but not so much that it upsets various people reading their newspapers. It certainly doesn't bother the teenagers listening to their walkmans or whatever it is they listen to nowadays, as they have zoned out too much to take in any kind of outside information. Through the many windows is a grey, urban setting with lots of tall buildings in need of a wash. By the some of the windows are bins. Mental starts a conversation: 'I can't believe that guy that got lost riding the trains hasn't been found yet. I've heard of people missing stops or the last train home, but I've NEVER heard of someone who travels up and down the country in an attempt to get to their house. And for a whole year!...' Morgan responds: 'He's supposed to be really smart, too. He works for the government. ...' Mental scratches his head and responds: 'Absolutely bizarre... Anyway, let's patrol these carriages to find those thugs who keep pointing and laughing at people.' Morgan nods his head.

The two march to the door and enter a more or less repeating area. This time however, they come across three tall juvenile delinquents in trendy clothes and with bleached hair. One haircut is blonde, another is black and another is silver, but it looks grey. As expected, they keep laughing at everyone. Most commuters ignore them. The two police officers stomp up to them and then stop with more stamps. Mental towers over the group and screams: 'DO YOU THINK IT'S FUNNY, DAMAGING PEOPLE'S SELF-ESTEEM, HUH?! AND WHAT THE HELL IS SUPPOSED TO BE FUNNY ABOUT READING?' The silver thug responds as cold as an extra large ice cube: 'Everything'. Mental tip toes to appear more intimidating and responds: 'Very witty, old man. But say another word and I'll get you arrested for being a dick.' Silence follows and the group back away and chat amongst themselves. Morgan winks at Mental.

All of a sudden, Morgan looks towards a bin and narrows his eyes. Through its rectangular gap, on top of its litter, is a note with 'PLEASE F\*\*\*ING READ' or something like that written on it with large writing. He comments to his coworker: 'Hey, what's that?' He points to the note. Mental responds: 'I don't know, but it could be important.' Morgan grabs the piece of paper and it seems he was correct about what it said on it. He unfolds it to reveal a larger message, which he reads aloud: 'Please for the love of God help me. I missed a train home to Charltonham (a very real town near Gloucester - me commenting) and ended up in Scotland. I tried to get a train back but ended up in Southern France. I have no idea where I am now, as I've broken my glasses and can't read any signs. I ask people for help, but I seem to scare them away. I survive off discarded food and drinks thrown away in train bins, and I'm getting really desperate. Look for a person with long hair, a beard down to the floor and wearing a T-shirt with 's\*\*t happens' written on it. That will be me. Thanks for your help! !!'

Mental comments: 'He sounds like he's in a really bad way. Maybe we should search for him. The trouble makers are keeping to themselves now, and I think I've set them straight...' His friend replies: 'He may never be found. His navigational abilities were described by the Chief of Police as 'poor beyond belief'. He could be in Russia now, for all we know.' Mental continues: 'Come on. How would you feel if you lived on bin food for twelve months and if society gave up on you? We've got the week to ourselves, now that our original mission has been accomplished...' Morgan scratches his head: 'We have no leads, though...' Morgan raises a finger in triumph: 'The thugs!' Morgan shakes his head: 'What would they know?' 'Let's find out...'

The two walk up to the low level hooligans who are discussing who the biggest bellend in the area is and Mental asks them a question: 'Hey, have any of you seen a guy with a beard down to the floor, looking confused around here?' The blonde ruffian responds: 'The legend of the tracks? I think I saw him when I was in Scotland...' Mental is ecstatic: 'Aha!' The black haired hoodlum disagrees: 'No, I think I saw him when I was down in Wales...' Mental looks to the floor: 'Ah... Can you describe his state of mind for me, please?' The same thug continues: 'I dunno, he looked kind of upset. I wouldn't say he's given up on life, though. He just kind of looked vigilant and he kept focusing his eyes like a crazy person...' Morgan is hopeful: 'That does sound like him...' The thug sighs and carries on: 'That was months ago now, though...' Morgan nods: 'Thanks for your time.'

Morgan and Mental leave the mini gang once more and the latter officer starts his own conversation: 'So he may be in two miles away countries. How about we flip a coin? Heads we go to Scotland, tails we go to Wales. Because it rhymes...' Morgan agrees then picks a penny from his pocket: 'Always good to have some loose change on you, right?' Mental gives a thumbs up and Morgan tosses. It's a heads... Morgan comments: 'So we're going to Scotland. And this train is heading in that direction. I guess we have nothing to do for a while... How about a rap battle?' Mental's eyes light up: 'Good thinking!' He gets right into it: 'Who are those three dickheads on the train? They think they're cool, but they're really a pain... in the ars...' Quick as a flash, the blonde youngster turns to the hip hop artist and snarls as his friends observe: 'What was that?' Mental continues: 'Yeah, I'm talking about you, you piece of poo. But that's not all, I hate everything you do. B\*tch.' The insultee's jaw drops open and he retaliates: 'You're not a cop, you dress like a freak. You dress like that every day, every week. Geek.'

Morgan butts in: 'He's no geek, you all reek. When I slap you hard you'll all squeak...' Mental has a suggestion: 'I think 'shriek' is a better word than 'squeak'. Rabbits squeak when you hit them, not people...' The silver thug interrupts: 'You'd know all about that.' Mental is enraged: 'Oh I hit rabbits, do I? Well you... errrrr...'

' Mental goes red and breaks out into a a sweat. Morgan is concerned: 'What is it, Mental?' His friend mutters in his ear: 'I did actually run over a rabbit one time...' The silver guy shouts: 'See!!' Morgan stands up for his chum: 'But that was an accident...' Mental has a comeback: 'It didn't shriek though, it more popped. But it was a quick, painless death, I'm sure. It happens.' The gang have a laughing fit.

Morgan's jaw drops open as he looks out a righthand window. As the train pulls up by a busy station, it's seen that four other on the go platforms are next to it. Electronic information is repeated up above. The furthest platform has a train with a number of people leaving and getting on it. One man in particular stands out as his beard is ridiculously long and he keeps stepping on it. It's the lost man. He runs in out of the same carriage over and over as people do their best to avoid eye contact with him. He screams: 'Help! Help!' He fixes his eyes hard on various objects around him and jumps up and down. Now even travellers far away from him scatter. Mental looks at his friend, puzzled: 'You look like you've seen a ghost'. Morgan replies: 'I've seen something even more unlikely. It's the lost man...' Mental looks out the thick glass and comments: 'Well I'll be damned... What are the odds in that?'

Morgan bangs the pane in a frenzy and Mental copies him. The thugs join in for whatever reason. Maybe because it's an excuse to get away with vandalism. The glass starts to crack. The lost man's gaze turns to the attacked vehicle and the two cops run to the door to open it to the sound of more banging and then shattering. But it's too late. The train departs as Mental jogs back and shouts through the now wide gap: 'Hey, you there! It's the police! We're coming to save you!' The apparent hobo starts to cry and he goes back to jumping, this time with happiness. Others nearby still try their best to avoid him.

Mental turns to Morgan: 'We have to pull the emergency stop lever. This might be our only chance to rescue him!' The three hoodlums run to the device and block it as the train speeds, rocking as ever. The silver guy snarls: 'You're not going anywhere. We demand a rematch.' Desperate, Mental tries his best to be witty: 'Get the f\*\*k out of my way. If you don't... you're gonna pay'. The silver thug is stunned: 'That wasn't witty, that was abuse.' The blonde guy is enraged: 'Let him have it, Jim!' The silver punk does so: 'No I won't move, I'm gonna make you groove...' Morgan cuts in: 'Oh, this is ridiculous. Get out of our way or we'll taser you.' Mental looks the three straight in the eye, one by one: 'Don't mess. Bellends. We don't have to rhyme.' Impressed with such fearless authority, the three leave the area. Morgan notes: 'See. That was easy. Now that I think of it, let's just wait till the next stop though. Then we can get off, speak to the staff and get them to capture you know who...' Mental agrees: 'Good plan. I can't believe we're about to meet him. He'll be so chuffed!' Lots of bored, twiddling of thumbs follow.

Finally, the locomotive halts and the duo exit it. Mental runs to press the crowded station help button. A man heard on the neighbouring, slightly distorted speaker answers: 'Hello? What seems to be the problem?' Mental takes deep breaths, but still he bobs up and down. He jabbers, manically: 'It's the police! We're trying to find a man who has been lost on the tracks for a year, now!' 'What do you mean?' 'I know this sounds crazy, but long ago a man tried to get home to Charltonham but ended up all over the country. We've just spotted him! Please say that Mental is looking for him.' 'Damn punks wasting my time!' 'No, you have to believe me!' 'What does he look like then?' 'He has long hair, a beard to the floor and is wearing a t-shirt with 's\*\*t happens' on it!' 'I'm warning you!' 'I'm serious! If you don't believe me, check out the CCTV at the last stop...' There is a long, tense pause. The man from the speaker continues, awkwardly: '...Oh yeah. I'll get the staff there to send a message through the loud speaker. You'll get him.' Mental puts his hands together and points them upwards by his face: 'Thanks!'

The previously lost man is still in the same station and is running backwards and forwards once more. This time however, there is no transportation to keep revisiting. A message is heard from the station tannoy: 'To the long-bearded man who is freaking everyone out, it's over! You're going back to where ever you came from! Mental is coming for you!' Tragically, the announcer wasn't being 100% clear. He should have said CAPTAIN Mental. It seems the weirdest man in the world thinks a madman is after him. He reacts accordingly by screaming, dashing towards the ticket gates, jumping over them and then legging it through crowded commercial street pavements. Such streets feature countless multi-storey buildings, heavy traffic, hungry freeloading pigeons, a few stunned policemen and warm feelings from tramps. (The man hasn't stopped screaming, by the way).

Things are only getting worse. The local police recognise the lunatic and chase after him. They shout: 'It's ok! We're with Mental, he's explained everything!' Once again, the lawmen could have been more clear. The lost man starts to pull his hair as he dodges pedestrians. Apparently full of adrenaline, he manages to sprint that little bit faster. Until he trips over a clapping, cheering tramp's legs. He falls spectacularly, knocking over a trash can. He huddles in pain, moans then looks to the sky. He mumbles to the out of breath officers now standing over him: 'All I ever wanted to do was get home...' A policeman comments: 'You're going home now. You can go back to politics.' Those few words make the leg-rubbing homeless man's eyes go very wide. In disbelief he remarks: 'Politics? I don't believe you. He's a f\*\*\*ing idiot...' The fallen man slowly closes his eyes.

The clumsy hobo lookalike wakes up in a section of a hospital ward. It is a cramped white space, with blue curtains as walls. There is basic plastic furniture. Morgan and Mental are by his side.

The latter breaks the silence: 'My God do we have some questions for you!' The patient groans, weakly: 'What do you mean?' 'First of all, how come you never got asked for a train ticket?' 'I have to come clean...' 'Yes?' 'You won't get mad?' 'Er... I don't know...' 'I never wanted to be found...' Mental clenches his fists: 'You what? You weren't wasting police time were you?' The wounded man is as awkward as ever: 'Do you realise how much work it is, working for the government?' 'No...' 'It's a lot. I snapped. I couldn't take any more. So one day I woke up and thought to myself 'f\*\*k it. I'm going to live as a hobo.' 'I don't understand...' 'It's not so bad. It's an adventure. Travelling the country; pretending to be dead so you don't get asked for tickets; becoming an urban legend...'

Morgan spins his finger by his forehead and joins the conversation: 'I kind of understand. It just sounds out of character... What were you doing in the area, by the way? And how come no one ever complained about your behaviour?' 'How come no one complained? Have you ever heard of the death stare? It freaks people out... People were too scared.' 'But you kept asking people for help, surely you were being friendly at times...' 'Yes. Then I gave them the death stare. I only asked for help as a game. Like tiddlywinks. I didn't actually want it.' 'Ah'. 'Anyway, I chose to visit a station close to you, just for the thrill of it. I was thinking 'I wonder if I will be found even if I'm near a police station...'' 'Why did you leave a note asking for help?' 'Again, just to screw with you. I got bored.' Mental shakes his head in disbelief: 'You do realise I really want to hit you? I'm known for tasing people for no reason, so you better sort yourself out. Quickly.'

The bed-ridden man looks puppy like: 'I'm tired of being a tramp. Do you think I can go back to working for parliament?' Mental is reassuring: 'Sure, you look so sweet. I was wrong about thinking you were a \*\*\*\*. (Wow... - me) I don't see why not. Everyone needs a holiday. You just took things a little further...' The patient blows the two officers a kiss and speaks again: 'Can I have new glasses please? I can't see a thing.' Mental continues: 'Of course you can have new glasses. You can have your job back, live in a mansion, and get completely normal reactions from people. Everything will be fine. Trust me. Anywho, got to back to being a policeman, glad you're ok. Bye!' Mental strolls out of the cubicle then the ward, with Morgan following.

As the two ramble through hospital corridors, Mental speaks again: 'Things are really getting weird nowadays, aren't they? We had that deranged super hero setting fire to cars, the sausage roll killer's relative going on a rampage, the drugged tramp races...' Morgan responds: 'Tell me about it. It's almost too weird to be true.' Mental coughs: 'Ahem... I mean if all of this stuff was in our imaginations, we'd know about it... Right?' 'What do you mean?' 'Oh never mind. Just a weird dream I had. Forget about it.' 'Oh, ok.'

' Morgan raises his fist to the air and continues: 'Anyway, let's fight some REAL crime!' The two jump in the air, victoriously.