

NO FARTING IN BEANTOWN:

A Tragedy

by
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LIGHTS UP on a bare stage. TOMMY PUZZO stands center, in dramatic lighting.

TOMMY

My dad, he could fart. Farts were his livelihood. Growing up on the streets of Boston, nothing but cans of beans and clam chowder to eat, there weren't a lot of options. You were gonna grow up to work in the BBB, the Boston Baked Beans plant, or a life on the streets. A few kids, the lucky ones, might make it to the NSA. Not the NSA you're thinking of. This NSA stands for: The National Society of Assblasters. My dad was one of the best.

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Tommy's dad, STEVE enters, along with PAM.

PAM

You're one of the best, Steve!

STEVE

One of?

PAM

Yeah!

STEVE

How about *the* best?

PAM

Oh, Steve!

He grabs her and kisses her.

TOMMY

That's my moms. She and dad got married by my dad's coach, at the NSA's fourth of July fart-off.

Steve proposes to Pam. They settle down to dinner at a table.

TOMMMY

For a while, the NSA was the best thing to happen to the people of Boston. Everyone loved the fart-offs, except one family: The Birks. They owned Boston Baked Beans. People who didn't grow up in beantown, they didn't want nothing to do with a brand that makes you fart. What was good for the people of Boston, was bad for the Birks. And who's friends with the chief of police? Steve Puzzo, or Graham Birk?

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DAN, a policeman enters.

STEVE

Whaddaya think you're doing, walking in on our chowder, copper?

DAN
Sorry Steve, orders. I'm here to lock you up.

PAM
Whose orders, Dan?

GRAHAM BIRK enters, an upstanding citizen.

GRAHAM BIRK
My orders, Mrs. Puzzo! Mine! We're cleaning this city up!

PAM
You want to clean this city up, you better start at the top.

GRAHAM BIRK
And what's that supposed to mean?

PAM
The NSA won't let this stand!

STEVE
Pam, babe. Quiet. You'll wake the baby.

Tommy puts on a baby's bonnet.

STEVE
What are you charging me with, Dan?

DAN
Well...

GRAHAM BIRK
Farting! In a public place!

STEVE
You gotta be kidding me!

PAM
What proof you got?

DAN
He's the head of the NSA, Pam.

GRAHAM BIRK
We're giving the city back to the people. The good people. Who don't run around farting all over the place. Stinking it up. Bringing real estate prices down.

DAN
I'm really sorry, Steve.

Steve holds out his hands. The officer cuffs him.

PAM

Steve!

STEVE

It'll be okay, Pam. Take care of Tommy. I'll fight this.

Dan takes him off. Graham remains behind.

PAM

You're a monster.

GRAHAM BIRK

You better watch your boy there, Mrs. Puzzo. Lots of boys without fathers grow up to be degenerates. Wouldn't want what happened to your husband to happen to him.

He exits. Pam CRIES, and CRIES, and CRIES.

PAM

I told you not to fart! I told you!

Tommy takes off his baby bonnet, and tries to comfort her.

TOMMY

I know, Ma. I know. I couldn't help it.

PAM

You could too, you're ten years old, Tommy!

TOMMY

I know how old I am, Ma!

PAM

You're practically a grown up. There's no farting in Beantown.

TOMMY

I'm sorry. I said I was sorry.

PAM

Why'd you do it? You know there's microphones everywhere. They might kick you out of school.

(beat)

Was it to impress a girl?

TOMMY

No, ma. Girls are gross.

PAM

Aw, look at you, you're sweating bullets. You got a crush.

TOMMY

I do not!

PAM

As long as it's not that Chelsea Birk girl.

Beat. It's hard for Tommy to admit.

TOMMY

It's from trying to hold it in, Ma. They fed us bean chowder in the cafeteria.

PAM

(scared)

Run upstairs. Quietly. In the fart cupboard.

Tommy runs off.

PAM

You tell me when something like that happens next time. You can't go holding it in. That's what happened to your father.

LIGHTS FLICKER, a FLASHBACK.

Pam, seated, cries onto Dan's shoulder.

PAM

It's not right! It's just not! In prison, like that? They couldn't even let us see him before... before... before... And they made you... you... you...

DAN

I volunteered. Thought you should hear it from someone who cared about you.

PAM

You're so good to me.

Dan comforts Pam.

DAN

Pam, you gotta be strong. You gotta be strong for Tommy. For your five year old son, Tommy. Now that your husband's dead.

PAM

I'm all alone now.

DAN

You're not alone. You've got me.

They kiss.

Tommy enters, shocked, silent. Pam pushes Dan away.

PAM
His father hasn't been dead a week, Dan.

TOMMY
What?

DAN
Tommy, how long you been there?

TOMMY
My dad's dead?

PAM
Oh, come here kid.

Tommy runs behind the chairs and hides.

DAN
Doc said it was from holding in his farts.

PAM
Don't scare the boy.

She tries to grab Tommy.

DAN
It's a damn shame, what they're doing to this town. Said he never saw so much bloating.

PAM
I'm serious.
(to Tommy)
Tommy, your father, he's gone to a better place. He's up in Heaven. Where he can fart forever. Tommy, you are five years old. Start acting like a grown up!

DAN
You're the man of the house now.

PAM
Come here.

TOMMY
No!

PAM
Come out here, this moment!

TOMMY
No!

DAN
Maybe I should go...

PAM

You could stay.

DAN

I know none of us have, you know, in a while, but, if you need anything, us NSA boys, we look out for our own.

PAM

Thanks.

Dan exits.

PAM

Tommy, your father was a good man, but he did some bad things. And he's dead now, so it's time to move on.

She exits. CHELSEA BIRK (can be doubled by Graham in a wig) enters.

CHELSEA

Should we move on?

TOMMY

Naw, let's stay a little longer. We're nineteen!

CHELSEA

Someday, I want to move out here. Outside of Beantown. It's so beautiful.

TOMMY

So are you.

CHELSEA

Tommy! Are you flirting with me?

TOMMY

Maybe I am.

He tries to make a move on her. She steps away.

CHELSEA

And you know what the best thing about being out here is?

She FARTS.

TOMMY

Chels!

CHELSEA

We're outside the city limits, there's no microphones. No spies. A man can be himself out here.

Yeah? TOMMY

Yeah. CHELSEA

He FARTS.

Maybe we could move out here, someday. TOMMY

Yeah? CHELSEA

Yeah. TOMMY

They kiss. They FART. It's beautiful.
LATER:

But Tommy, you promised me! You promised! CHELSEA

I know! But the NSA! My boys look up to me! TOMMY

It's not safe! You know my dad has it in for -- CHELSEA

Quit being paranoid! TOMMY

I'm not being paranoid. He knows. He has spies, everywhere. CHELSEA

Not everywhere. TOMMY

Even in the NSA. CHELSEA

This is more important than you or me. This is about Beantown. TOMMY

What if I told you I've got your bean in my oven? CHELSEA

Are you saying? I'm gonna be a dad? TOMMY

Chelsea nods.

He hugs her, so in love.

TOMMY

I have to go to the meeting.

CHELSEA

It's Dan, alright? Dan's the spy.

TOMMY

Dan? I gotta go.

Tommy runs off.

CHELSEA

Don't do nothing stupid, Tommy!

Dan enters, looking around, suspicious.
Tommy enters from behind him.

TOMMY

Dan.

DAN

What did you call me down to the docks for?

TOMMY

Have a little chat.

DAN

Shoot, kid.

Tommy pulls out a GUN.

TOMMY

Maybe I will.

DAN

What are you --?

TOMMY

I know what you did.

DAN

So I slept with your mom, alright? So what? We loved each other.

TOMMY

That why you had my dad locked up?

DAN

Your dad knew I was a cop.

TOMMY

Hiding behind your badge?

Yeah. DAN

Too bad. TOMMY

Tommy shoots Dan. Dan crumples,
speaking into his walkie.

DAN
Officer down. The Boston Baked Beans loading docks.

He shoots him again. He crumples, dead.
Beat.

DAN
(not quite dead)
Officer down.

Tommy shoots Dan again. Long beat. Dan
FARTS, a squeaker. Tommy shoots him
three more times for good measure.

He tucks his gun away as PAM enters,
crying. CHELSEA tries to comfort her,
holding a bundled baby in her arms.

CHELSEA
That's alright, Ma.

BILL enters, another cop. *

TOMMY
Bill, what're you doing here?

BILL
Locking you up.

He locks Tommy up.

PAM
My boy! You can't lock my boy up!

CHELSEA
Tommy, how could you?

BILL
He's a murderer. That's how.

PAM
He'd never do something like that! My Tommy's a good boy!

BILL
Not what my NSA sources tell me.

TOMMY

That's okay, Ma. You just be quiet. I'll be out soon.

BILL

I don't think so, Tommy. You killed the chief of police.

Chelsea steps forward, the baby in her arms.

CHELSEA

My dad testified against Tommy, called his whole family "criminal scum." My family. My baby boy. Tommy got the chair. They fried him up like a bean. But before he went, they asked him if he had any last words... He just let one rip. Could always make me laugh, even when I was crying. I just hope, I just want better for our son. Maybe we'll leave Beantown. Maybe we'll get outta here. Somewhere that's free. Somewhere you can fart.

Maybe there's a dramatic tableau, reuniting father & son in heaven. Maybe they FART together.

LIGHTS OUT. THE END.