

THE CAREER AUTHOR



Bonus Episode 11 // *Planes, Trains & Automobiles* (1987) // 93 minutes



A man must struggle to travel home for Thanksgiving with an obnoxious slob of a shower curtain ring salesman as his only companion.

Genre: Comedy

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt093748/>

Internal: NONE (no "Hero's Journey" arc) or *slight* character growth for Neal Page.

External: ACTION – Countdown

Progressive Complication (1:24:00) - Del confesses to Neal that he's alone with nowhere to go.

Crisis (1:24:00) - Does Neal leave Del to fend for himself or does he bring a complete stranger home for Thanksgiving dinner?
IRRECONCILABLE GOOD

Inciting Incident (12:30) - Neal and Del land in Wichita and the flight to Chicago has been cancelled.

Climax (1:25:00) - Neal brings Del home.

Resolution (1:26:00) - Neal kisses his wife with Del smiling, "happy ending."

"You're going the wrong way!"

THE THREE ACTS

Act I

Neal is doing his best to get home for the holidays but weather and unexpected travel complications make that challenging. He is working within the confines of the ordinary world in Act 1 (following the instructions of the airline).

Act II - Approx. 30% mark (00:28:00)

Neal and Del wake up (cuddling) after a night in a motel in Wichita. They now must find a creative, alternate way to get home to Chicago.

Act III - Approx. 87% mark (01:21:00)

Neal and Del have arrived in Chicago and decide to go their own way—or do they?

DOES THE MOVIE WORK? WHY OR WHY NOT?

The Career Authors believe *Planes, Trains & Automobiles* works, but barely. Hughes lost an opportunity for a Scrooge-style moment of realization or redemption. Although Neal and Del are funny characters, they are not likeable and often appear selfish. Characteristic of Hughes' style, the second act is long with a series of irreversable progressive complications. While the film had potential to end with more emotional resonance, it still stands as a comedy classic and one of John Candy's best performances.