

THE UNQUIET WITNESS

by

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INT: DINER - DAY

Office, just past the kitchen. The phone rings.

BRETT CHERNEY, one of the partners in the business, picks it up.

BRETT

Yeah ?

BRETT CHERNEY, Brett's brother, is on the line.

BRETT (O.S.)

Brother -

BRETT

Yeah. What is it, Brent ?

BRETT (O.S.)

Brother, I am in the shit !

BRETT

What's up ?

BRETT (O.S.)

I'm fucked !

BRETT

Yeah. Okay. What's the problem ?

BRETT (O.S.)

Doughnuts !

BRETT

Yeah ?

INT: BAKERY - DAY

Brent on the phone to Brett.

BRETT

Ten thousand !

BRETT (O.S.)

How many ?

BRETT

Ten thousand !

BRETT (O.S.)

Did I hear you right ? Ten thousand ?!

BRETT

Yeah. That's right. Ten fucking thousand !

INT: DINER - DAY

Office. Brett on the phone to Brent.

BRETT

Jesus ! How the fuck did that happen ?
Don't the two ends of your bakery talk
to each other at all ? It is in-house.

BRENT (O.S.)
It's such a large building. Some ass-hole
ordered ten thousand !

BRETT
How the fuck did that happen ?

INT: BAKERY - DAY

Brent on the phone to Brett.

BRENT
This mother-fucking imbecile - he wrote
down one, zero, zero, zero, zero - ten
thousand !

BRETT (O.S.)
He didn't check it ?!

BRENT
No. The jerk wrote ten thousand - an
extra zero.

INT: DINER - DAY

Office. Brett on the phone to Brent.

BRETT
Why didn't they check it at the other end ?

BRENT (O.S.)
It's not usually necessary.

BRETT
What ?

INT: BAKERY - DAY

Brent on the phone to Brett.

BRENT
They often get orders of ten thousand.

INT: DINER - DAY

Brett on the phone to Brent.

BRETT
Not from us.

BRENT (O.S.)
Yeah, I know; not from us. What am
I gonna do with all them doughnuts ?

BRETT
I'll sell them.

BRENT (O.S.)
They'll go stale.

BRETT
I'll sell the fucking things !

BRENT (O.S.)
 Okay. I'll have them sent over. Love
 you, brother.

BRETT
 See you, Brent.

BRENT (O.S.)
 'Bye, Brett.

Brett puts the phone down.

Later:

The phone rings. Brett picks it up. On the other end, his brother, Brent.

BRENT (O.S.)
 Hi, bro.

BRETT
 Hi, Brent. How are things ?

BRENT (O.S.)
 Man, you saved my ass.

INT: BAKERY - DAY

Brent's office. Brent on the phone to Brett.

BRETT (O.S.)
 What're brothers for, huh? I told
 you, you need help, you always got me.

BRENT
 You think it'll be okay ?

INT: DINER - DAY Brett on the phone to Brent.

BRETT
 Sure...

BRENT (O.S.)
 It's just...

BRETT
 What ?

BRENT (O.S.)
 Ten thousand ! That's an awful lotta
 doughnuts - they'll go stale.

BRETT
 O' course they're gonna go stale.
 Ain't your problem...

INT: BAKERY - DAY Brent on the phone to Brett.

BRENT
 Yeah, but -

BRETT (O.S.)
 Fuck that ! I'm telling you, ain't

BRETT (O.S.) (cont'd)
your problem no more - it's my problem.

BRETT
Thanks, bro.

INT: DINER - DAY

Brett on the phone to Brent.

BRETT
I'm gonna take care of it.

BRETT (O.S.)
Okay. Love you, brother. 'Bye, Brett.

BRETT
'Bye, Brent.

Brett puts the phone down.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

The diner proper. People being served with coffees and doughnuts by waitresses. Two cops, STEVE ATKINS and BRUCE DULANEY sit down at a table.

ATKINS
You fancy a doughnut ?

DULANEY
Nah - not for me. I gotta watch my weight.

ATKINS
Okay, Fatso. I'm gonna have me a doughnut, 'cause this place here, see, this place is the doughnut capital of the world.

DULANEY
This place ?

ATKINS
This very spot, like a hallowed temple. This is where God has his doughnuts.

A waitress, TRACY WILKINS, overhears and comes over to Atkins.

TRACY
Ah, c'mon, Steve ! That is bullshit !

DULANEY
What are you saying ?

ATKINS
Tracy, are you trying to say this ain't the place for doughnuts ?

TRACY
No. This is the doughnut centre of New Mexico, but -

DULANEY

Yeah ?

TRACY

- We ain't never had God visit our little diner. What's more, he don't eat doughnuts.

DULANEY

How d'you know ?

TRACY

'Cause I ain't never served him. You're more likely to see a Grey in here, one o' them aliens from Roswell, -

ATKINS

You ever served an alien ?

TRACY

No.

DULANEY

Do aliens eat doughnuts ?

TRACY

Not that I know. Enough of this nonsense. What would you gentlemen like to order.

ATKINS

I'll have a doughnut and a cup of coffee. Lotsa milk, five sugars.

DULANEY

I'll just have a coffee, please. Black, no sugar.

ATKINS

I want the biggest God-damn doughnut you got !

TRACY

Coming right up.

Tracy goes to pick up their orders.

DULANEY

Nice girl.

ATKINS

And she don't stand for no bullshit.

DULANEY

Um, that could be a problem.

ATKINS

Why's that ?

DULANEY

You couldn't make a couple 'cause

DULANEY
you're always talking bullshit.

ATKINS
Me, talking bullshit ?

DULANEY
Yeah - you. You are an inveterate
bullshitter !

Tracy returns with the coffees and the doughnut.

ATKINS
Thanks, Tracy.

TRACY
It's a pleasure to serve you gentlemen.

DULANEY
Thanks.

Tracy goes to serve some other customers.

Atkins takes a bite out of his doughnut.

ATKINS
Delicious !

He drinks his coffee.

ATKINS
This is an exceptional doughnut.
You should try one.

DULANEY
I told you, I'm on a diet.

ATKINS
Suit yourself.

Atkins eats his way through his doughnuts and drinks down his coffee.
Dulaney studiously sips through his black coffee. Atkins finishes and
wipes his mouth.

ATKINS
They always got fresh doughnuts here.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

Brett watches as the stale doughnuts are brought into the diner through
the back door, and stacked up in baskets.

Tracy comes in.

TRACY
That's a helluva lotta doughnuts
you got there. How are we gonna
keep them all fresh ?

BRETT
Look, Tracy, my idiot of a brother,

BRETT (cont'd)
 he ordered ten thousand by mistake,
 instead of our regular order of
 one thousand. I told him, not to
 worry; I would take care of it.

TRACY
 What do you plan on doing ?

BRETT
 I'm gonna pass them off as fresh.

TRACY
 What if a customer complains ?

BRETT
 I'll take care of it.

TRACY
 Okay...

Tracy turns from Brett and goes into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

The diner proper.

A customer, JIM KRAUSE, is waiting for a doughnut and coffee he has ordered.

Tracy brings the doughnut and coffee over and places them down on Krause's table.

KRAUSE
 Thanks.

Tracy goes to the counter.

Krause takes a sip of coffee and picks up the doughnut. He bites into it, spits it out.

KRAUSE
 Shit !

The other customers look at him.

KRAUSE
 Miss ! Miss !

Tracy goes over to him.

TRACY
 Sir - ?

KRAUSE
 What is the meaning of this ?

TRACY
 Sir - ?

She looks at him, pretending to be puzzled.

KRAUSE

This fucking doughnut ! It's fucking stale !

TRACY

I do apologise. I'll get you another.

KRAUSE

Yeah, well, it's not your fault.

She brings him another doughnut.

KRAUSE

Thanks. Er, Miss, I didn't mean to get nasty. It's just, I expect a fresh doughnut, and this place has a good reputation. I always got fresh doughnuts in the past.

TRACY

I understand.

He bites into the doughnut, then spits it out.

KRAUSE

Fuck ! This is stale ! You got any doughnuts ain't stale ?

TRACY

I'm very sorry, sir. This is very unusual.

KRAUSE

I want a non-stale doughnut, please - if you got one.

TRACY

Well, that's the problem, sir. They all look the same. They look okay. It's only when you bite into them, you can tell...

KRAUSE

What is going on ?

TRACY

I'm sorry, sir. I just don't know.

Brett, the owner, has heard the argument, and intervenes.

BRETT

Sir, what seems to be the problem ? It's okay, Tracy, I'll take care of it.

Tracy moves away from Krause.

KRAUSE

It's this doughnut, and this doughnut - they're both stale.

BRETT

That's very odd.

Tracy observes Brett and Krause from a little distance.

BRETT
You wish to make a formal complaint ?

KRAUSE
You got any fresh doughnuts at all ?

BRETT
I...I can't answer that question.

KRAUSE
You can't - ?

BRETT
You wanna complain, you come downstairs
to my office - okay ?

KRAUSE
I don't wanna complain...

BRETT
What do you want ?

KRAUSE
A doughnut I can actually eat.

BRETT
Are you making a complaint, or not ?

KRAUSE
Okay; I'll make a complaint.

BRETT
Follow me.

Krause follows Brett behind the counter, through the kitchen, to the back stairs leading downstairs to Brett's office.

Brett leads Krause inside, then closes the door.

INT: OFFICE - DAY

Brett offers Krause a chair.

BRETT
Please, sit down.

KRAUSE
Thanks.

Krause sits. Brett sits behind his desk.

BRETT
We'll haf-ta follow the formal
procedure for complaints.

Brett takes out a sheet of paper and a pen.

BRETT
Your name, please.

KRAUSE
Do we really haf-ta fill in the

KRAUSE (cont'd)
paperwork ?

BRETT
It's essential.

KRAUSE
Why ? I don't get it.

BRETT
Let me assure you, it is necessary.

KRAUSE
Okay.

BRETT
Your name, please.

KRAUSE
Jim Krause.

BRETT
How d'you spell that, Mr. Krause ?

KRAUSE
K, R, A, U, S, E.

BRETT
Okay. Now, your complaint was about
the staleness of our doughnuts, is
that correct ?

KRAUSE
Yes, it is, correct. I had two of
your doughnuts, and both were stale.

BRETT
I see. Well, this is a very serious
matter. We take all complaints very
seriously.

KRAUSE
I'm glad to hear that.

BRETT
You know what happens to each complaint ?

Brett stands and moves around the side of the desk, closer to Krause.

BRETT
You know what happens to people who
complain - ?

Brett suddenly whips up a baseball bat and whacks Krause on the head a
number of times.

BRETT
This !

Brett batters Krause to death.

INT: DINER - DAY Downstairs. Brett drags Krause's body to a storage room and locks the door, then goes back to his office.

INT: OFFICE - DAY

Brett picks up the phone and calls through to his brother, Brent at the bakery.

BRETT

Hi, brother.

BRENT (O.S.)

Hi, Brett. What's doing ?

BRETT

I got a problem...

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY/NIGHT

Evening. Downstairs.

Brett shows Brent to the storage room. He opens it up. Brent sees Krause's battered body and bloodied head.

BRENT

What happened ?

BRETT

He, er, made a complaint.

BRENT

He made a complaint - ?

Brett nods.

BRETT

Yep.

BRENT

That's a mighty dumb thing to do.

BRETT

Sure is. He complained about the doughnuts being stale...

BRENT

- They were stale.

BRETT

Of course they were ! It's impolite to point that out.

BRENT

He was a customer...

BRETT

Customers should not complain.

BRENT

The customer is always right.

BRETT

No, they're not. Not in my diner.
Not with my doughnuts. You eat in
my diner, you eat what you're given,
and you will be grateful. You complain,
I'll kill you.

A beat.

BRETT

We gotta get rid o' him before he starts
to smell. That would give the game away.

BRENT

It might arouse suspicion. What are we
gonna do ?

BRETT

I need you to help me. I'll take the feet.
You get his arms.

They drag the body out of the office to the food of the stairs, then
pause for breath.

BRETT

We gotta dispose of the body, somewhere
no-one will connect it to us.

BRENT

Where ? You got any ideas ?

BRETT

I was thinking of taking him up to
Dreamland.

BRENT

Where the fuck is that ?

BRETT

The Nevada Desert - you know, the top
secret facility where they're developing
the Aurora.

BRENT

What ?

BRETT

They got this secret military base, Area 51,
where they got the aliens.

BRENT

I ain't never heard o' that.

BRETT

That's because you're an ignorant pig-fucker.

BRENT

I don't know no Dreamland.

BRETT

Rumour is, all they care about is national
security - like if someone wants to find

BRETT (cont'd)
out they got aliens there.

BRENT
Aliens ? They keep them in that place,
that detention centre, for undesirable
aliens.

BRETT
Extraterrestrials, you moron ! Like ET.

BRENT
That thing ?!

BRETT
The rumour is, they got the Grey aliens
there, from Roswell.

BRENT
Where ?

BRETT
In Area 51. We're gonna drive up to
Dreamland, with this guy in the trunk.
When we dump the body there, the co ps
and the military will think it's to
do with the aliens...they won't come
looking for us.

BRENT
Brother, that is real smart.

BRETT
I am the brains of this outfit.

BRENT
You sure are.

EXT: DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The driveway round the back of the diner. Brett and Brent are lugging
a storage trunk along the driveway to Brett's car.

Brett opens up the trunk and puts the storage trunk inside it and closes
the lid shut.

BRETT
A trunk in a trunk. How about that ?

No reply from Brent.

BRETT
Brent, I don't think you appreciate
my wit.

Nothing from Brent.

BRETT
Never mind. Let's take a trip down
to Dreamland.

They get into the car, which then drives off, Brett at the wheel.

INT: CAR - NIGHT

Brett driving.

BRETT
Life is what you make of it, if
folks give you a chance. What do
you reckon ?

BRENT
I guess so.

Later:

BRETT
You ain't said much, since we took
to the road. I am concerned...

BRENT
I'm afraid, we might not get away
with it.

BRETT
We will, if you follow my guidance.

BRENT
Oh, I'll do that; I ain't got a plan
of my own.

Later:

BRETT
We gotta find us a motel somewhere.

BRENT
Well, I wrapped him up real good.

BRETT
Yeah, but he's gonna stink.

BRENT
I done my best, bro.

BRETT
I know. Only - we gotta sort him out,
you know, before we deposit him outside
Dreamland.

BRENT
I guess so.

Later:

Brett spots a sign saying "Motel, 200 yards".

BRETT
Looks like..that's the place for us.

BRENT
I gotta wash myself up.

They drive down to the motel.

EXT: DRIVEWAY - DAY

Motel driveway.

The car stops. Brett and Brent get out. They go to the trunk and open it up. They carry out the large luggage trunk and lower it to the ground.

JAKE MCKLINSKEY, the proprietor of the motel, comes out of his office to help them.

MCKLINSKEY

You boys need any help ?

BRETT

Er, no.

BRENT

We sure could do with some help.

Brett looks at Brent with anger and dismay.

BRETT

No, we don't...need any help. Thank you. We appreciate the offer, but, no.

MCKLINSKEY

Looks like a heavy trunk.

BRENT

It is heavy.

BRETT

We can manage. Brent...

Brett lifts one end up. Brent takes the other end. They carry it a few steps, then stop.

MCKLINSKEY

I would estimate, from the way you're carrying it, that trunk must weigh, two hundred pounds.

BRENT

Yeah. That's about right; that's what it weighs.

BRETT

Brent, shut up !

MCKLINSKEY

Trunk like that, empty, weighs about fifty pounds. So, the question is, what you got in the trunk weighs a hundred and fifty pounds ?

BRETT

Nothing.

MCKLINSKEY

Nothing weighs nothing. A hundred and fifty pounds weighs one hundred and

McKLINSKEY (cont'd)
fifty pounds. What you got in the
trunk, fellas ?

Brent looks at Brett.

BRETT
What do you think we got in the trunk ?

McKLINSKEY
A dead body.

Brett and Brent are both shocked McKlinskey got it right.

BRETT
Oh, Mister, you got some strange sense
o' humor. Dead body - ha !

Brett pretends to laugh a little, then stops when McKlinskey looks at
him.

McKLINSKEY
Thing is, what else could it be ?

BRETT
It's not a dead body !

McKLINSKEY
Well, it certainly ain't a live one.

This breaks the tension. They all seem to enjoy the joke and laugh.

McKLINSKEY
What's in the box ?

BRETT
It's a one hundred and fifty pound
barbel.

McKLINSKEY
You brothers ?

BRETT
Yep. I'm Brent, and this here is Brett.

McKLINSKEY
Nice to meet you, Brett, Brent. I'm
Jake McKlinskey.

BRETT
Nice to meet you, Jake.

BRETT
...you, Jake.

McKLINSKEY
You folks wanna drag that trunk of
yours into my office...? I can offer
you something to drink.

BRETT
That's mighty kind of you, Jake.

BRENT

Thanks.

McKLIMSKEY

This way.

Brett and Brent follow McKlinskey into his office at the front of the motel.

INT: MOTEL OFFICE - NIGHT

Brett and Brent lug and drag the luggage trunk into the office, followed by McKlinskey, who shuts the door after them.

McKLINSKEY

I guess you folks are gonna rest up here tonight, with your, trunk.

BRENT

Er...?

BRETT

We'll take the trunk with us, into whatever cabin you got vacant.

McKLINSKEY

We got several cabins vacant at the moment. I'll give you cabin number three.

McKlinskey gets the keys to cabin 3 and hands them to Brett.

McKLINSKEY

I guess you're gonna take your trunk with you, into cabin number three ?

BRETT

Er, yes.

McKLINSKEY

You wanna keep the contents a closely guarded secret - ?

BRETT

You seem mighty curious about what's in the box.

McKLINSKEY

I guess I am. I will respect your privacy. Before you go to your cabin, I could make you a nice hot drink, and some sandwiches.

BRETT

That's mighty kind of you.

McKLINSKEY

You just wait here a few minutes.

McKlinskey goes out of the office, into the kitchen.

Brent looks at Brett, and exhales.

BRETT

I just hope that guy's curiosity don't get the better of him. If it does...

BRENT

- Not another one !

BRETT

Only if I have to.

BRENT

You're becoming too psychopathic.

BRETT

If circumstances dictate...

A beat.

BRENT

I am, a little hungry.

BRETT

The guy's gonna fix us up.

BRENT

He sure is an accommodating fella.

McKlinsky returns holding a tray with three hot cups of coffee and a plate of sandwiches. He puts it down on the table.

He hands a cup to Brett and Brent, then takes the last one for himself.

McKLINSKEY

You boys help yourself.

Brent and Brett each take a sandwich and start to eat.

BRETT

Um, nice sandwich.

McKLINSKEY

You guys ever regretted something ?

BRENT

Everybody regrets something.

McKLINSKY

Have you ever had a serious regret ?
You done something you wish you hadn't ?

Brent looks at Brett.

BRETT

I can't say I have.

McKLINSKEY -(to Brent)

You - ?

BRENT

Er, no. I ain't never done nothing
I wish I hadn't.

McKlinsky sips his coffee.

MCKLINSKEY
You guys ever made a mistake.

BRETT
Sure...

BRETT
- Everybody made a mistake.

MCKLINSKEY
...A serious mistake, which you regretted later on...?

BRETT
What are you getting at ?

MCKLINSKEY
I'm a little suspicious, about that trunk.

Brett leans forwards.

BRETT
What do you think, is in the trunk ?

MCKLINSKEY
A dead body...

BRETT
- You already said that.

MCKLINSKY
I'm serious now. It is a body, yes ?

BRETT
Say it was, a body. What are you gonna do about it ?

MCKLINSKEY
Nothing. I ain't gonna call the cops, report you to the authorities. I just need ta know, why you killed the guy in the box.

BRETT
I run a diner. This ass-hole, the fella in the box, complained about our doughnuts. I took him downstairs and bashed his brains out with a baseball bat. What do you reckon to that ?

MCKLINSKEY
You don't like complaints...

BRETT
That's about it.

MCKLINSKEY
Well, people die from die to time, even in a motel. So, I got a cemetery round

McKLINSKEY (cont'd)
the back, where I bury all the people
died in my motel, usually from natural
causes.

BRETT
You ever killed someone ?

McKLINSKEY
I can't say I have. I just wanna help
you out-ta this spot of bother you
seem to be in.

BRETT
Man, this is good hospitality, you
letting us use your cemetery.

McKLINSKEY
Why not, if I can help you gentlemen - ?

BRETT
Mighty kind of you.

McKLINSKEY
Sometimes, we feel too much. We gotta
learn to compromise.

He sips his coffee.

Brent and Brett eat their sandwiches and drink their coffees.

McKLINSKEY
I got a spade. I can help you dig a grave.

BRETT
Why, thank you.

McKLINSKEY
Last time, I had to, dig a grave, was last
year. A young died in cabin number five.

Brent looks at McKlinskey.

McKLINSKEY
She just died. There was no post-mortem.
I just buried her. Year before, an old
woman died. I buried her. So, you see,
you bury him here, no-one will notice
he's gone. No-one would suspect you.

BRETT
I think I'll take you up on your kind
offer.

McKLINSKEY
I'll go fetch the spade.

McKlinskey puts his cup down and goes out.

BRETT
That guy is one smart cookie.

BRETT

Sure is.

BRENT

He's nice, though...

BRETT

...A friendly fella.

McKlinskey comes back in, with three spades.

MCKLINSKEY

Got one for each of us.

He leans them against his desk, and then goes to sit down.

MCKLINSKEY

You know, if I hadn't inherited this motel, I would've become a gravedigger. I reckon, that is an under-rated profession.

BRENT

You're darn tooting. Without gravediggers, no-one would get buried.

MCKLINSKEY

We don't want that.

BRETT

No, we don't.

Brett and Brent finish their sandwiches, then wipe their hands.

BRETT

Well, I reckon we can go do that job now. You ready, bro ?

BRENT

I sure am.

MCKLINSKEY

I'll show you the cemetery.

McKlinskey picks up the three spades.

MCKLINSKEY

Come with me.

McKlinskey goes to the door, carrying the spades.

Brett and Brent lift the storage trunk over the threshold of the office door, onto the ground outside.

EXT: MOTEL GROUNDS - NIGHT

McKlinskey shows the way, carrying the three spades, as Brett and Brent drag and lug the storage trunk along the ground.

They reach the cemetery, which an area of level ground without any actual gravestones. This puzzles Brent.

BRENT

Where are the gravestones ?

MCKLINSKEY

This is an unofficial cemetery. We don't advertise people dying here - not good for business. They're all buried in unmarked graves.

BRENT

Oh, that's so sad. No-one will come to visit them, or lay flowers.

MCKLINSKEY

That's the way it is, I'm afraid.

BRENT

I would not like to be buried out here, in an unmarked grave; not even a wooden cross.

MCKLINKSEY

It's sad, but it is necessary.

BRETT

Do you even remember where you buried each particular individual ?

MCKLINSKEY

I have some idea, who's buried where, but, my memory ain't what it was. It's the ageing process.

BRENT

I don't wanna dig up someone's grave.

BRETT

You do know where the bodies are buried ?

MCKLINSKEY

Roughly...

Brent shakes his head.

BRENT

This ain't nice...

MCKLINSKEY

- But it is, necessary, if you wanna hide that body. Best place is in the ground.

BRETT

I guess so. Is this ground, consecrated ?

MCKLINKSEY

I wouldn't exactly call it that.

McKlinskey bends down and scoops up a handful of soil, then lets it filter through his fingers.

McKLINSKEY
This soil is special, but it ain't
consecrated.

BRETT
What is it, then ?

McKLINSKEY
Special...

BRETT
- Because it's got bodies in it - ?

McKLINSKEY
Ain't holy, ain't consecrated; but,
it is special.

BRETT
How is it special ?

McKLINSKEY
You'll find out, soon enough, once
you dig his grave.

They all look at the storage trunk.

McKLINSKEY
Let's get digging.

They each pick up a spade and start to dig the grave.

Later:

They have dug about half-way down, about two and a quarter feet.

Brent takes a breather and looks up at the moon.

BRETT
It's spooky.

BRETT
Just keep digging.

BRETT
Just so long as I ain't digging
my own grave...

BRETT
No-one does that. Keep digging.

Brent goes back to digging.

Later:

They have got the grave down to about four and a half feet.

Brett gives Brent a leg up to get out of the grave.

Brent then pulls Brett out of the grave.

Brent and Brett each give McKlinskey a hand and help pull him out of
the grave.

McKLINSKEY

I always learned life's lessons the hard way, never the easy way.

Brett and Brent look puzzled.

McKLINSKEY

Let's get that man out of the trunk.

Brett unlocks the storage trunk and opens it up.

McKlinskey goes over to look at the body of Jim Krause.

McKLINSKEY

Did you learn your lesson, not to complain, too late ?

BRENT

Looks like he did.

BRETT

Some people never learn; whatever you do, no matter what happens, never, ever, complain. You got that, bud ?

BRENT

He's dead; he can't answer that.

BRETT

If only he knew...

McKlinskey sighs.

McKLINSKEY

...Too late...Let's bury him.

Brent and Brett tip the body out of the trunk, and roll it near to the grave.

BRETT

Sometimes, you do things, you know it's wrong, but you do it, all the same; you feel a compulsion to do it, even though, you know it's wrong; you can't stop yourself. That's when bad things happen.

BRENT

Like you killing that guy ?

BRETT

I couldn't stop myself. I had to do it.

McKLINSKEY

Why ?

BRETT

Because he complained, about a doughnut.

McKLINSKEY

That's a trivial reason, for killing

McKLINSKEY (cont'd)
someone.

BRETT
I guess it is.

McKLINSKEY
You regret killing him ?

BRETT
I think I do.

McKLINSKEY
You are showing remorse.

BRETT
I do regret, I killed the guy.

McKLINSKEY
Remorse don't bring back the dead.
It only comforts the living. Some
things, like death, are irreversible.

BRETT
This is the worst decision I ever
made, the whole of my life.

McKLINSKEY
You might repent what you done -
ain't gonna help him now. You might
be penitent, but you ain't gonna go
to no penitentiary, I make sure o'
that.

BRETT
Thanks.

BRETT
I ain't no accessory, neither.

McKLINSKEY
Of course not. I will take care of
you two boys.

BRETT
We're mighty grateful. That was the
stupidest thing I ever done, so, stupid !
Sometimes, I ask myself, was that really
necessary ? Why did I do it ? I don't
know any more, not for sure. I regret it.

BRETT
Not as much as he does...

McKLINSKEY
- That's for sure.

A beat.

McKLINSKEY
Okay, let's bury him.

Brett and Brent roll the body to the edge of the grave, then roll it into the grave. The body spins a little, then falls to the bottom of the grave.

BRETT

I'm sorry, bud, but I don't like complaints. If only you didn't complain...

McKlinsky picks up a handful of soil and slowly lets it drop into the grave, then picks up a spade and starts shovelling in some soil.

Brett and Brent pick up their spades and shovel soil into the grave.

Later:

Brent, Brett and McKlinsky finish topping off the grave and put their spades into the ground, so that they stand up on their own.

McKLINSKEY

That's a good job, boys. I guess we can have a good rest now, and contemplate our lives.

BRENT

"Contemplate - ?" Why should we do that ?

McKLINSKEY

We want to give the soil a little time, to work its magic.

BRETT

"Magic - ?" What are you talking about ?

McKLINSKEY

This ground is special.

BRETT

It ain't consecrated - you said so.

McKLINSKEY

It might not be consecrated, but it is, concentrated.

BRENT

Soil's soil, man; ain't nothing special. It's dirt; that's all.

McKLINSKEY

This here soil has many secrets; the secrets of the people buried in it. All that intelligence, of dead people, don't just go nowhere, you know; don't just dissolve. It has a life, afterwards, after death.

BRETT

You trying to spook us ? We already confessed. You know our secret, and you promised to keep it.

McKLINSKEY

I ain't lettin' on your secret to no-one.

BRETT

That was our agreement...

McKLINSKEY

- And I'm sticking to it. Only you folks need to realise, there are always consequences, to things you do.

McKlinskey looks at Brent.

BRETT

I guess that's so.

McKLINSKEY

Mere misfortune can happen to anyone; but deliberate malice, is a different matter. Accidents happen, but murder shows intent.

BRETT

Okay, I murdered him; I admit that.

McKLINSKEY

You shouldn't have done that.

BRETT

Of course, I shouldn't have done that; but I done it, and I have to live with that. It's a matter for my conscience, okay - ?

McKLINSKEY

Tell that to God.

BRETT

Don't get all moral with me ! We gave him a decent burial.

McKLINSKEY

If he'd never met you, he'd still be alive.

BRETT

It was a fateful meeting.

BRETT

It was for him.

BRETT

Look, what's done is done; I can't go back on it. I can't bring him back to life. He's dead.

A beat.

A sound, like a mole burrowing, starts coming from the grave.

Brett and Brent look around, to see where the noise is coming from, but McKlinsky just looks at the grave.

BRENT
What's that noise ?

BRETT
A mole - ?

BRENT
Where is it ?

Brett looks all around, but then is drawn to look at the grave.

A finger, and then a hand emerges from the grave.

BRENT
What's happening ?

MCKLINSKEY
Looks like your fella is rising from
the grave.

An arm emerges, then another.

Brett looks at the body rising from the grave, in amazement.

Krause's head emerges.

MCKLINSKEY
He's come to say, hello.

Krause, as one of the undead, with soil all over him, climbs out of the grave, and looks directly at Brett.

KRAUSE
You ! I've got unfinished business
with you..

Brett trembles, but manages to speak.

BRETT
What..do..you want ?

KRAUSE
I want to know, why you murdered me ?

BRETT
You complained -

KRAUSE
Is that unreasonable ?

BRETT
You complained about the doughnuts.

KRAUSE
They were stale.

BRETT
I don't like complaints -

KRAUSE
That's not a good enough reason,
to take someone's life.

BRENT (to BRETT)
He's right.

KRAUSE
You think you can just murder
someone like that, and it will
no consequences for you ? You
can't do that !

BRETT
What..are you..gonna do ?

KRAUSE
Teach you a lesson.

Krause picks up a spade and approaches Brett.

BRETT
No !

Brett turns and starts to run, but Krause is miraculously up to him and strikes Brett in the back with the spade.

Brett collapses to the ground, but is still alive and breathing.

BRETT
Please, no. Show some mercy.

KRAUSE
Why should I ? You never showed me
none.

Krause raises the spade above his head and strikes down at Brett's head, to deliver a fatal blow.

Brett's head has a huge gash in it, spurting out blood. He cannot survive this, but takes a while for his eyes to close and expire.

BRETT
I curse you.

KRAUSE
You cursed yourself.

Brett dies.

Brent runs up to him and bends down.

BRENT
Brett ! Brother !

Brent sees that Brett is dead, and starts to cry.

KRAUSE
He got what he deserved. For each
action, there is an equal reaction.
That is the rule of Nature.

BRENT
He's still my brother !

McKlinsky approaches Brett and Krause.

McKLINSKEY
He was your brother. He ain't no more. He's dead.

BRENT (to Krause)
You killed him !

KRAUSE
He killed me...

BRENT
But -

KRAUSE
What ?

BRENT
You were dead. The dead should not kill the living.

KRAUSE
I am not dead. I am one of the undead. The undead can kill the living.

Brent shakes his head.

BRENT
This should not be happening.

McKLINSKEY
But it is, happening.

BRENT
How is that possible ?

McKLINSKEY
This soil is special soil. It turns the dead into the undead. I am one of the undead. You missed the clues. Didn't it strike you as a bit strange a motel should have its own cemetery ?

BRENT
I..didn't get it.

KRAUSE
No, you didn't, did you ? You know why you didn't get it ? You know why ?

Brent looks blank.

KRAUSE
Because you're dumb; you're stupid. You're an imbecile !

Brent shrugs.

Krause looks at McKlinskey.

KRAUSE
He's so dumb, it would be unfair
to kill him.

McKLINSKEY
He was an accessory -

KRAUSE
- After the fact.

McKLINSKEY
You're gonna spare him - ?

KRAUSE
It would be like killing a dumb
animal. He is a moron.

BRENT
Don't talk about me like I'm not
there.

McKLINSKEY
Oh, I'm sorry. Did I upset you ?

Brent is bemused.

KRAUSE
Listen, fella, the only reason we
might spare you is because you are
beneath a certain level of intelligence.
Don't make us revise our opinion of you.

BRENT
What do you want me, to do ?

McKLINSKEY
If you want us to spare you, we advise
you don't speak of this, to no-one.
Can you do that ?

BRENT
Sure. I can keep my mouth shut, when
I need to.

KRAUSE
Good. If you did tell anyone, they
wouldn't believe you; you know that ?

Brent sighs.

BRENT
I guess you're right.

Krause looks to the horizon and notices that the very tip of the top of
the sun is beginning to rise above it.

The light is turning from twilight to the dawn.

KRAUSE
The sun's coming up. We'd better

KRAUSE (cont'd)
get back in our graves.

MCKLINSKEY
Yours is newly dug.

McKlinskey looks at his own grave, which is further towards the back of the cemetery.

BRENT
You guys have to go back into the ground ?

MCKLINSKEY
Of course; we are the undead. We can only rise from our graves and ponder our existence when the sun goes down, between the hours of dusk and dawn. That was another clue you missed - a motel where the owner is a nighthawk.

Brent looks down at Brett's body on the ground.

BRENT
What about him ?

KRAUSE
You bury him. We have to go to sleep.

Krause goes to his grave and burrows into it with his hands.

McKlinskey picks up a spade and digs down into his grave.

Krause submerges himself below the level of the soil.

McKlinskey tosses the spade to the side of his grave and submerges himself below the level of the soil.

Brent sighs and then goes over to pick up a spade. He moves a little distance from Brett's body and begins to dig him a grave whilst the sun rises above the horizon.

Later:

Brent has dug the grave about half-way down. He takes a breather, and sees that the sun is now high enough in the sky to cause him to sweat.

Brent sighs.

Later:

He is digging the grave towards the necessary depth, with the sun high in the sky and causing sweat to drip down his forehead.

Brent has to wipe the sweat away with his sleeve.

He sighs, but keeps digging.

Later:

Brent has dug down about four and a half feet, the depth of a grave.

He puts the spade blade-down in the ground and uses the handle to help him leap up out of the grave.

He manages to get out of the grave but falls forwards onto the ground due to his momentum.

He is clear of the grave and looks at foot height towards Brett's body.

Brent then uses his hands to push up off the floor and to stand up.

Brent sees that the sun is high in the sky, and then looks at his watch, which says, 11.04 in the morning.

He goes to Brett's body, and drags it so that it is in line with the grave.

He rolls Brett's body into the grave. It spins a little, then goes down and hits the bottom of the grave.

BRENT

Ain't six foot under - four and
a half feet, approximately.

But no-one is listening, so he is speaking to himself and the dead Brett.

BRENT

Sorry, buddy; it's the best I can do.

Brent starts to shovel in the soil.

Later:

Brent has managed to fill in the grave. He puts the spade blade up in the ground, wipes his forehead, then walks a little way back from the grave.

He looks up at the sun, which is now past midday.

He looks at his watch, which says, 2.15 in the afternoon.

He picks up the spade and carries with him to the office.

INT: OFFICE - DAY

Brent goes into the office and sits down.

He closes his eyes and has a little sleep.

Later:

Brent's eyes open. He looks at his watch, which now says, 3.27 in the afternoon.

He sighs and gets up.

He goes out of the office.

EXT: MOTEL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Brent goes to the car and gets inside.

The car drives off.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

The diner clock says, 5.21 in the afternoon.

Tracy is beginning to clear up, and most of the customers have now left.

The two cops, Atkins and Dulaney come into the diner.

Tracy looks up from a table she is clearing.

ATKINS

Hi, Tracy.

TRACY

Hi. You come for a doughnut ?

ATKINS

And a cup o' coffee. But before that, we got a few questions to ask you.

TRACY

Me ? I ain't done nothing.

DULANEY

Sorry, Tracy. We didn't mean it like that. We're looking for this guy...

Dulaney shows Tracy a photo of Krause.

TRACY

I remember him. He was here. He bought a doughnut, and complained, it was stale. So, I got him another doughnut, and he said, that was stale.

ATKINS

Was it stale ?

TRACY

No-one else complained..

DULANEY

But was it stale ?

TRACY

I guess it was. I mean, he said it was stale. I didn't try it myself. I took his word for it. Then the owner, my boss, Mister Brett Cherney, he asked this gentleman -

ATKINS

- Name's Jim Krause -

TRACY

- took this gentleman downstairs, to the office, to..deal with his complaint.

DULANEY

How did he do that ?

Brent has just come in and catches the end of the conversation.

BRENT

I'll tell you how he dealt with it. My brother, Brett, does not like complaints. He took this guy, Krause, downstairs to his office and he hit him with a baseball bat, killed him, because he complained. I said to my brother, Brett, that ain't a good enough reason to kill someone, and he kinda agreed, but he still done it. He got me to help him, dispose of the body. That makes me an accessory -

DULANEY

- After the fact -

BRENT

- After the fact, not before. I had no idea he was gonna murder this gentleman. I didn't even know who this gentleman was, until he told me. To kill him for complaining about a doughnut, that's just crazy. I told him, I thought he was, insane. He agreed; but he said, "what's done is done," and he couldn't go back on it, because the man was dead in his office, and he had knocked his brains out with a baseball bat.

Brent has sat down by now at a table near the cops.

ATKINS

You helped him dispose of the body ?

BRENT

I did. I thought I had to.

DULANEY

You didn't think about reporting it to the cops first ?

BRENT

I..I wasn't thinking straight. I just thought, I had to, help my brother, because, he was my brother.

ATKINS

What happened next ?

BRENT

This is where it gets weird.

ATKINS

Go on.

BRENT

We put him in the car, the guy, his body, in the trunk of the car, and we drove off down the freeway. I was mighty uncomfortable with the whole

BRENT (cont'd)
 thing. I told him so, my brother
 Brett, I was mighty uncomfortable
 with trying to hide the body. He
 said, "Do it for me, brother," so,
 I had to, kinda, oblige. Er, Tracy,
 should you be listening to this ?

TRACY
 It's fascinating.

BRENT
 Is it ?

TRACY
 Sure is.

DULANEY
 Er, Miss, this might become testimony
 in a short while. Might not be good
 for a random member of the public to
 hear all these details.

TRACY
 I ain't random. Anyhow, you ain't given
 him his Miranda warning, or told him his
 rights.

ATKINS
 Okay, it's still, unofficial...

BRENT
 It's just, the next part of the story
 concerns, the supernatural.

Tracy laughs and scoffs.

TRACY
 Ha ! I don't believe that.

BRENT
 Tracy, you might get scared; you
 might get upset.

TRACY
 Go on; lemme hear the rest of the
 story.

BRENT
 That okay with you fellas ?

DULANEY
 I don't think we're gonna take down
 anything supernatural, as evidence.

BRENT
 Okay. This is what happened. We drove
 to a motel and lugged Krause's body in
 a trunk - I forgot to mention that -
 we put his body in a trunk, before we
 got in the car...when we got to the
 motel, - it was night by then - the

BRENT (cont'd)

owner pops up and says, "What's in the trunk?" and we try to say, "Nothing." But he reckons it's a dead body, and he's right. So, Brett has to admit he murdered this guy because he stupidly complained. So, the owner says, I got a cemetery round the back of the motel.

ATKINS

A motel with its own cemetery - that's weird.

BRENT

It sure is. The owner says, I'll help you bury him, and I won't call the cops. So, the three of us, we buried the guy. Then, Krause rises from the dead. Krause says he's one of the undead, and he's holding Brett to account. Brett apologises, for killing him, but Krause ain't happy. He picks up a spade and kills my brother. Now, it's getting close to sunrise, and the owner says, he's also one of the undead, and him and Krause have to return to their graves, before sunrise. They tell me, I can bury Brett, if I want. So, I buried Brett; then, I came here.

DULANEY

You expect us to believe that pile of crap?

BRENT

It's what happened.

ATKINS

No; it didn't happen like that. You killed Krause, and you asked Brett to help you hide the body; and when Brett said, No, you killed him as well. Then, you invent this ridiculous story about the undead.

BRENT (to Tracy)

Why don't cops ever believe you when you tell them the truth?

TRACY

It's not easy, to believe your story.

DULANEY

It's God-damn impossible to believe his story.

BRENT

It's the God-damn truth!

ATKINS

The supernatural bit is baloney. Were you high on drugs when this happened?

BRENT

I don't take drugs; I have never taken drugs.

DULANEY

Supernatural things don't happen in the real world. They only happen in movies, and this ain't a movie. The only explanation makes sense, is that you somehow started to, hallucinate, and saw these things, which weren't real.

BRENT

I saw what I saw.

ATKINS

- Because you were high on drugs.

TRACY

It is possible, you were under the influence of drugs, without knowing it...like someone else administered hallucinogenic drugs, maybe in a cup of coffee, or something like that.

DULANEY

That is possible - you never knowingly took drugs. I guess, if you were under the influence of hallucinogens, that might be some kinda defence, diminished responsibility.

ATKINS

That might mean, manslaughter, not first, or second, or third, degree murder.

BRENT

I ain't never murdered no-one -

DULANEY

- But you might've killed them, two people, without knowing you were doing it, at the time. Only now, you're no longer under the influence of that drug, whatever it was, you're trying to make out of what was clearly, a bad trip, and you're in denial, you killed them.

TRACY (to Brent)

That is possible.

DULANEY

That's how your attorney will get you off the murder charge, to get the court to accept, manslaughter by virtue of, diminished responsibility.

TRACY

It could be your best chance...Can you accept that ?

DULANEY

The supernatural story is clearly your invention; but is it merely a subconscious invention, not some malicious lie ?

ATKINS

If I were you, I would reject this supernatural story altogether. It just makes you seem, insane.

DULANEY

Diminished responsibility, by virtue of, temporary insanity, under the influence, of hallucinogenic drugs, administered by person or persons unknown. Sounds good.

ATKINS

You outlined his whole defence.

DULANEY

Well, if he tells the jury his story, the defence will call an expert witness to testify, this is evidence of persistent delusion caused by the hallucinogen. Brent, that means, you could tell the story, if you really wanted to.

BRENT

I believe it was what happened.

DULANEY

You're deluded.

Brent sighs.

TRACY

It's your best chance.

CUT TO:

INT: JAIL HOUSE - DAY

A cell in the jail house.

Brent's lawyer, JEFF LOGAN, has just been let into the cell by Atkins, who locks the door afterwards.

LOGAN

So - I've had a look at this brief, and, you're sticking to that story about the undead - is that correct ?

BRENT

It is.

Logan sits at the table.

LOGAN

That means, this trial is gonna turn on your mental state. The problem is, no traces of any

LOGAN (cont'd)

hallucinogenic drugs were found in your system. So, we cannot plead temporary insanity, by virtue of you being under the influence of any hallucinogenic drug; which means your only defence must be, insanity, an actual condition, state of, persisting insanity; diminished responsibility, by virtue of, insanity. You must be examined by a psychiatrist, who will be prepared to say, you were subject to delusions at the time of the killings, and you are currently suffering from the same condition you had at the time, paranoid schizophrenia.

BRENT

Schizophrenia ?!

LOGAN

Paranoid schizophrenia. That means, you were crazy then, you're crazy now. You are a danger to others. You are a psychiatric case. That will get you off a murder charge. That is your classic manslaughter due to, diminished responsibility.

BRENT

You got a shrink will say I'm crazy ?

LOGAN

He, or she, will examine you for evidence of schizophrenia. If he or she is satisfied you got that psychiatric illness, he or she will testify to that effect; and, which is what will get you off, it is reasonable to conclude, you were suffering from schizophrenia at the time of the killings. I am not an expert, but that story you told, it could be interpreted as a delusion, caused by, paranoid schizophrenia; but a qualified and respected expert in psychiatry must make that diagnosis, not me.

CUT TO:

INT: CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Logan comes in, and shuts the door behind him.

DR. ALICIA NEAL, a forensic psychiatrist, has her report on the table.

LOGAN

Well, what do you reckon ?

Alicia looks down at the file, then up at Logan.

ALICIA

He's not schizophrenic. There is no evidence of schizophrenia.

LOGAN

What about that story, about the undead ?

ALICIA

That could have been, a schizophrenic episode, but there's no evidence that he's got schizophrenia now; so, we can't infer he had schizophrenia then, at the time of the killings.

Logan sighs.

LOGAN

So that story -

ALICIA

- Was an invention, to try to get him off the hook, the charge of murder. I will testify to that effect. He is sane.

LOGAN

Then he's going down.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL CEMETERY - DAY

A number of policemen and forensic experts in white suits are exhuming the bodies of Krause and Brett, excavating the graves.

The area is surrounded by police tape.

Atkins and Dulaney are supervising the dig.

Two bodies are recovered.

A FORENSIC EXAMINER checks the bodies, and then instructs they are placed in plastic body bags, as he has positively identified them, with photos.

The anthropologist goes over to Atkins and Dulaney.

FORSENSIC EXAMINER

It's where he said they were.

ATKINS

Strange place for a burial.

FORENSIC EXAMINER

Sure is. What's more, there's not much decay. The bodies are remarkably well preserved.

DULANEY

We've recovered the bodies, which makes it easier to prosecute him on a charge of murder.

FORENSIC EXAMINER

The cause of death, the causes, are consistent with one having his head bashed in with a baseball bat; the other's got a great big gash across his forehead, like a blow from the edge of a spade.

ATKINS

That matches what he said, except he did it; he killed both of them.

FORENSIC EXAMINER

I can testify how they died.

DULANEY

Thanks.

The forensic examiner goes back to his team and supervises the moving of the body bags into the back of the police van.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CELL - DAY

Logan is talking to Brent.

LOGAN

The forensic psychiatrist will not support a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. What's more, they exhumed the bodies, excavated them where you said they are; so, they got the bodies, killed in the way you said they were killed. Brent, you might as well tell the truth. You murdered them.

Brent shakes his head.

BRENT

No; I did not murder them.

LOGAN

You might get some clemency, if you plead guilty.

BRENT

I didn't do it.

LOGAN

My only position now, is to plead guilty and plea-bargain. That might not work, but your story about the supernatural is just preposterous; it insults the intelligence of the judge and jury. You'll get no mercy if you insist on telling that stupid ridiculous lie.

BRENT

It's the truth.

LOGAN
Well, Brent, I am just gonna wash
my hands of you.

Logan gets up and goes to the door.

BRENT
You can represent yourself, if you
tell such lies.

Logan speaks to the guard outside.

LOGAN
We're finished.

The door is unlocked, and Logan goes out.

CUT TO:

INT: MORGUE - NIGHT

The forensic examiner opens up the body bags. His ASSISTANT helps him to move the bodies, one at a time, onto two autopsy tables.

The forensic examiner turns the lights above each table on, then adjusts them to shine on the bodies, one at a time.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
Injuries on the first body, identified
as Brett Cherney; injuries are consistent
with repeated blunt force trauma; could
have been caused by a baseball bat...

He moves to look at the other body.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
...The second body, identified as James,
"Jim" Krause, injuries are consistent
with sharp force trauma; could've been
caused by, the edge of a spade...

There is some noise, like gas being expelled from the mouth as Brett's body seems to shake and shudder a little.

ASSISTANT
Er...?

FORENSIC EXAMINER
Don't worry. It's just some gas
escaping from his body; makes like
a shudder.

Brett coughs.

The forensic examiner stops his examination and looks at Brett.

Brett starts to move.

The assistant looks at the forensic examiner.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
Bodies can move after death.

But Brett starts to rise off the table. He turns his legs around and sits up.

ASSISTANT
This..isn't happening...

The assistant runs out of the autopsy room.

The forensic examiner looks at Brett.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
Are you alive ?

BRETT
No. I'm dead.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
If you're dead, you should be able to speak. You mustn't be dead. You must not have been dead.

BRETT
I was dead, alright. Then, I became undead.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
The undead - ? How is that possible ?

BRETT
Special soil. Many years ago, that little piece of land at the back of the motel, was struck by a meteorite, something from outer space. It brings the dead back from the dead; but, we are not alive. We are, the undead. We walk at night, and become like the dead during the day-time.

FORENSIC EXAMINER
Well, this is, strange.

BRETT
But it is, happening.

Krause's body begins to splutter into life.

BRETT
That was the man I murdered; I admit to that. Now he's one of the undead, like me.

Krause coughs and then rises. He turns his legs over the side of the autopsy table and sits up.

Krause spots Brett.

KRAUSE
You - you idiot ! You did this to me !

BRETT
I apologise. I do feel bad, about what I did. I feel remorse.

KRAUSE

I don't care ! I will always hate you for this.

BRETT

One day, you might forgive me.

KRAUSE

I doubt it.

BRETT

One day...

Krause steps down from the autopsy table.

KRAUSE

We, the undead, are never satisfied. You know why we misbehave so much, why we haunt people, and taunt them, it's because we often have an intense feeling of injustice, due to all the wrongs the living have done to us.

BRETT

But I'm dead, now; I'm one of the undead, like you; you killed me.

KRAUSE

That was some justice, then.

BRETT

Life is too short to harbour resentments.

KRAUSE

Life is too short, not to harbour resentments. You hate someone's guts, for good reasons, ain't no reason not to hate their guts. I don't believe in this Christian forgiveness bull. That is for people, who ain't never had no good cause to hate people. If someone does you a particular harm, something so bad, it cannot be forgiven, you are within your rights, not to forgive them. Forgiveness, for certain wrongs, is, unrealistic. Only an ass-hole forgives a serious life-changing harm. I had a decent life, a loving wife, and you ruined it.

BRETT

I'm sorry, but you missed the point. You will remain one of the undead for all eternity. You can resent me for as long as you like, but in the end, you will get tired of hating me.

KRAUSE

I hate you for what you did to me. I will always hate you.

The forensic examiner shakes his head in disbelief.

BRETT

You did to me what I did to you.

KRAUSE

You got what you deserved.

BRETT

I guess I did.

KRAUSE

I didn't get what I deserved; I deserved better.

BRETT

Life ain't fair, sometimes. One day, you will decide to move on.

KRAUSE

I doubt it.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CELL - DAY

Logan, back on the case, is talking to Brent.

LOGAN

He's come back from the dead, and he supports your story. He admits, he killed Jim Krause. The only problem is, will the judge accept evidence from one of the undead ? It is a remarkable development.

BRENT

So, you believe me now ?

Logan shrugs.

LOGAN

I guess I do. Also, Krause, the guy Brett murdered, will give evidence, Brett killed him with a baseball bat. He's one of the undead, now. After that, Krause himself might go on trial for killing Brett. These are legal complications. The dead aren't our silent witnesses no more, when the undead give evidence. The undead are the unquiet witness to the crimes of the living.

CUT TO:

INT: DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Logan speaking with the DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Your client can now only be charged with being an accessory after the fact, not murder. Brett Cherney will be charged with the homicide of James Krause. I guess we'll try to charge Krause with the homicide

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (cont'd)
of Brett Cherney, but, can one of
the undead be charged with murder ?

LOGAN
I don't see why not.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Because, the dead have no legal
status.

LOGAN
Krause is, undead.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
You know, there was this case I was
working on, years ago: the guy was
convinced, he was in the right; but,
there was no corroboration. I told
him, I said to him, "a dead witness,
a very important witness." That was
it. He had no case. An undead witness
is much better than a dead witness,
because, as in this case, the undead
can give evidence; only, judges, the
courts, are not used to testimony from,
the undead. I hope it is admissible.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTROOM - DAY

Judge ELLIOT DANBY presiding.

JUDGE DANBY
I can accept the plea of guilty from
the defendant Brett Cherney to the
second degree murder, of James Krause.
I can also accept the plea of guilty
from the defendant James Krause to the
first degree murder of Brett Cherney.
Both defendants cannot be here in person,
as they both become active at night, when
the court does not sit. I sentence Brett
Cherney to fifteen years' incarceration.
I sentence James Krause, to twenty years'
imprisonment. That is the order of the
court.

Judge Danby bangs the gavel on the block.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Krause's ATTORNEY talking to Krause.

KRAUSE
So, I get a longer sentence than him.

ATTORNEY
It was first degree murder because
you intended to kill him before the
incident occurred. It was premeditated.

ATTORNEY (cont'd)

He got second degree murder because he acted on the spur of the moment, reacting to your complaint about the stale doughnuts. The judge was sympathetic to you, but had to give you a longer sentence.

KRAUSE

You call that justice ?

ATTORNEY

It is the law.

KRAUSE

And this restorative justice nonsense -

ATTORNEY

It's not nonsense. It will help you both come to terms with what you did.

KRAUSE

I took his life because he took mine.

ATTORNEY

Life is not a game...

KRAUSE

What is it, then ?

ATTORNEY

Life is a series of lessons, we learn, one lesson at a time.

KRAUSE (sarcastically)

Then, we attain wisdom.

ATTORNEY

It's the only way people can learn to live with what they are, what they did.

KRAUSE

I was obtaining justice, for myself.

ATTORNEY

You should never take the law into your own hands.

KRAUSE

It was the only way I could get some retribution.

ATTORNEY

Revenge is not a worthy goal.

KRAUSE

You don't understand -

ATTORNEY

I understand, you're angry. That's why you need restorative justice.

KRAUSE
Your restorative justice cannot
restore me to life.

ATTORNEY
It might restore your mind. You
must have, peace of mind.

KRAUSE
It won't work...

ATTORNEY
It might...

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Krause, seated.

The MEDIATOR brings Brett into the room.

Brett sits.

MEDIATOR
We aim to achieve a reconciliation
between the offender and the victim.
In these unusual circumstances, each
of you is both offender and victim to
the other. You both did wrong to the
other. You both suffered wrong at the
hands of the other. Let's begin. Jim,
James, what have you got to say to
Brett ?

KRAUSE
I'm better than you.

BRETT
Are you ?

KRAUSE
Yes, I am...I'm more moral than you.

MEDIATOR
Brett...?

BRETT
How do you reckon that ?

KRAUSE
I killed you, after you killed me.
It was an act of retribution. If
you hadn't killed me in the first
place, I would never have killed
you. My seeking revenge was, is,
understandable. You murdered me
because I complained about stale
doughnuts. Complaining in such
circumstances is not unreasonable.
What is unreasonable, is killing
someone for making a complaint.

The mediator looks at Brett.

MEDIATOR

Brett...?

BRETT

I guess you're right.

MEDIATOR

You admit that ?

BRETT

I guess I do.

KRAUSE

You know, I had a really decent life.
I had a career. I had a caring, loving
wife. What about you ?

MEDIATOR

Brett - ?

BRETT

I ran a diner. I was not, married.
I was happy, content with my life,
until, this incident. He complained
about the stale doughnuts -

KRAUSE

- They were stale.

BRETT

I...I lost my temper. I...picked up
a baseball bat and killed him...for
complaining...I don't like complaints.

KRAUSE

What sort of pathetic reason is that ?
What sort of excuse is that ? You can't
do a terrible thing like that, and hope
to get away with it. Do you have a soul ?
Do you have a conscience ?

BRETT

Of course, I do.

KRAUSE

You're a psychopath.

BRETT

I suppose I am...

KRAUSE

Natural justice is not well served
by you.

MEDIATOR

We know that...

KRAUSE

I lost so much. You lost nothing.

BRETT
I lost my life.

KRAUSE
You deserved, to lose your life.

BRETT
I suppose I did.

KRAUSE
You're nothing special. I was...
something special. I might have
been...There was so much precious
in my life, so much of value. You
had nothing, of any value. You are,
worthless.

BRETT
You're too precious.

KRAUSE
You're..insignificant.

BRETT
So what if I am ?

KRAUSE
An insignificant person should not
take the life of someone of value,
to mankind.

A beat.

KRAUSE
I never fully achieved my potential.

BRETT
I'm sorry...

KRAUSE
I don't think you had much potential,
to achieve, so your death was not much
of a loss to the world; mine was.

MEDIATOR
Okay; that's enough for today. Let's
reconvene in a week's time.

Brett gets up and is led out by the mediator.

Krause sighs.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON - NIGHT

Visiting room.

Brent visiting Brett, overseen by prison guards.

BRETT
I had to do that, restorative
justice thing.

BRENT

What's that ?

BRETT

That's when you try to explain to the guy you hurt, why you done it. It's supposed to help you, and the guy you hurt, come to terms with what you did to them.

BRENT

Does it work ?

BRETT

Not so far. I am in the penitentiary, and I am penitent...The time was, you could not ask question of the dead... Maybe, things were better then. I can't give the guy any real answers, except, I regret what I did to him, as much as for his suffering, as for mine. I wish things had been different, but I can't change the past. Guilt: I got guilt, and it ain't pleasant. All I can do is, learn to live with guilt, and appreciate why it is necessary to feel for what I done. He'll never forgive me for what I done, and I don't blame him.

BRENT

You're not the person you used ta be.

BRETT

A good job too.

BRENT

I don't reckon the person you are now would ever have done, what you done.

BRETT

It's a little too late for that. I just wish I hadn't done it.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON - NIGHT

Visiting room.

DORA KRAUSE, wife of Jim Krause, visiting him.

KRAUSE

Thanks..for coming to see me.

DORA

I had to come..

KRAUSE

Of course..

DORA

I want to support you, but.."Till death us do part..." - you are dead..

KRAUSE
I was dead. I'm now, one of the undead.

DORA
I don't think I can remain married
to a person, who is, undead.

KRAUSE
You want a divorce ?

DORA
It would be better, for both of us.

KRAUSE
Better for you -

DORA
You're a convicted murderer.

KRAUSE
I was the victim, of murder.

DORA
You can't expect me to stand by you,
not in these circumstances.

KRAUSE
If you desert me...I will consider it
a betrayal.

DORA
Just stay out of my life.

Dora gets up to leave.

A guard shows her out.

KRAUSE
As you wish...

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON - NIGHT

The conference room.

Krause, Brett and the mediator, in a session of restorative justice.

KRAUSE
I lost my wife...

BRETT
She dead - ?

KRAUSE
No; she's still alive. She's gonna
divorce me. She don't wanna remain
married to one of the undead, and
I don't blame her.

BRETT
I'm sorry...

KRAUSE

I was disappointed, but I guess I understand. I felt betrayed by her, but, what can do ? She's got her own life to live. I guess I can't expect her to sacrifice her life for me. Everyone has abandoned me. When you're down, you're down, and no-one wants to be your friend.

Krause sighs.

KRAUSE

What did I do, to deserve this fate ?

BRETT

You complained...

KRAUSE

Is that a sin ? Is that a crime against anyone, anyone at all, in the whole world ?

Brett shakes his head.

BRETT

No...

KRAUSE

In this world of cut-throat psychopaths, I am, innocent...innocent of any wrongdoing.

A beat.

BRETT

What do you want ?

KRAUSE

I want...things to be...the way they were...before I got, murdered.

BRETT

You know that's impossible.

KRAUSE

It's what I want.

MEDIATOR

What you want, and what is possible, are two different things.

BRETT

I used ta be indifferent to the world, to people, to how they feel, all their emotions. I'm a better person now. This whole process has made me better. I can feel your pain.

KRAUSE

Good for you.

Brett looks at Krause.

BRETT

I can appreciate your anger, your frustration.

KRAUSE

I gotta get more out-ta life, but I can't, because I'm dead.

MEDIATOR

You are..undead. I can sense some hostility from you.

KRAUSE

You are so condescending...

MEDIATOR

You are so ungrateful...

KRAUSE

What have I to be grateful for ?

MEDIATOR

Your life...

KRAUSE

I'm dead. I'm undead. My life..is gone. I was grateful for the life I had, when I was alive...I'm not alive now. I can't be grateful for the way I am now, my..existence... I had such potential - it's all gone ! You know what it's like, to have all that taken away from you ? No, you don't ! You have no idea !

MEDIATOR

I'm disappointed in you. It seems, you have not fully embraced this process.

The mediator turns to Brett.

MEDIATOR

Brett, I'm proud of you.

BRETT

I know I did wrong. I can only ask for forgiveness.

KRAUSE

That Christian crap ! There are some things you cannot forgive.

MEDIATOR

I'm sorry you feel that way.

KRAUSE

Some things are not inevitable. I have lost too much...

MEDIATOR

What you don't have, is any humility.

Krause is shocked and appalled.

KRAUSE

"Humility ?!" I got nothing. I lost, everything.

MEDIATOR

It's your attitude. You're too stuck in the past. You're not able to move on. Brett, here, he can change; his attitude is much better.

KRAUSE

So, you're all on his side now - ?

MEDIATOR

I'm not on anyone's side. I am the mediator. I am, in the middle. It's not all about you. I want everyone to be happy, not just you. We aim to rebuild people; sometimes, they have to break down completely, if we're to make any progress. Brett has done that; you have not.

KRAUSE

So, he's your Golden Boy, teacher's pet.

MEDIATOR

He has made progress. You have not.

KRAUSE

You're trying to tell me what to think. You're trying to brainwash me into forgiving him.

MEDIATOR

Why can't you, forgive him ?

KRAUSE

"Forgive him ?!" For murdering me, for ruining my marriage, for all the damage he's done to me ?!

MEDIATOR

You need some peace of mind. You'll never get that, if you continue to hate him so much. You're just being stubborn...

KRAUSE

"Stubborn ?!" For being true to myself - ? For having integrity ?! You have no idea..what it's like.. to be me.

MEDIATOR

I have some idea...

KRAUSE

You got no idea whatsoever !

MEDIATOR

Calm down...

KRAUSE

Don't tell me to "calm down", you patronising...person.

Krause addresses Brett.

KRAUSE

And you, you never had any potential. You were the owner of a lousy diner, couldn't even sell a decent doughnut. What contribution have you ever made to society ?

BRETT

None...

KRAUSE

I did my bit. I helped people. I was kind and generous, with my time and my money. I was a well-respected member of society. I had something. Now, I got nothing. What did you ever have ? What did people care about you ?

BRETT

I only had my brother...

KRAUSE

- And look at the mess you got him into.

BRETT

I know. I regret that. I wish I hadn't involved him, but I had no choice.

KRAUSE

You don't think about the consequences of your actions, do you ?

BRETT

I used to be like that. Now, I'm learning to change...

KRAUSE (sarcastically)

Good for you !

The mediator intervenes.

MEDIATOR

Mister Krause, you really need to improve your attitude and think more positively about this process.

KRAUSE

I'm getting nothing out-ta this. He's getting everything ! It's all for his benefit, not for mine.

MEDIATOR

If you engaged more positively, you'd get more out of it. This is supposed to be a two-process. He is here to help you heal...

Krause shakes his head.

KRAUSE

No. This is doing nothing for me.

MEDIATOR

You need to change your attitude. You need to change your approach.

KRAUSE (to Brett)

You can't help me.

BRETT

You have helped me.

MEDIATOR

That's enough for today.

The mediator gets up. Brett gets up.

The mediator leads Brett out.

Krause stares into space.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Brett on his bed, reading a letter from MARY, who has learned about his progress.

It reads: "I am so pleased for you, so happy to learn about your progress, your repentance and hopes for forgiveness. I have a photo of you, which I treasure. My heart reaches out to you. Please, grant my fervent wish to visit you."

Brett looks at the attached photo of Mary and smiles, as she is clearly an attractive woman.

INT: CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Mary comes in, guided by a guard, to Brett's table. Brett smiles.

BRETT

You came...

Mary smiles back, and sits down.

MARY

Oh Brett, I can see you have an innocent soul.

BRETT

I did such a bad thing.

MARY

That was in the past. You gotta

MARY (cont'd)
put that behind you.

BRETT
I killed a man, for no reason. All he did was complain about two stale doughnuts, which is a perfectly reasonable thing to do.

MARY
He killed you...

BRETT
- In revenge, after I killed him. What he did, was justified.

MARY
We should not seek revenge.

BRETT
To kill me, was justice.

MARY
No, it was not. He only got that opportunity to take revenge because he became one of the undead. Most, if not all, people who are murdered, never get the chance to take such personal revenge. Justice is left to the state. No-one should take the law into their own hands.

BRETT
If I were him, I would do the same.

MARY
Not any more. The person you used to be, might've done that, not the person you are now.

BRETT
He can't forgive me.

MARY
If I were him, I would forgive you. Anyone would.

BRETT
It's not easy for him. He lost so much. His wife divorced him.

MARY
They allowed that ?

BRETT
They had irreconcilable differences. He was dead. He was one of the undead, and she was still alive.

MARY
I see; but if you love someone, that love should transcend all barriers.

BRETT

She didn't love him any more.

MARY

That's a shame. I reckon an undead person, like yourself, deserves as much love as a living person.

BRETT

How is that even possible ?

MARY

It's the person you love, who they are, not what they are. Whether they're alive, or dead, or, undead, it's the person you love. You need as much love as anyone.

BRETT

But I'm undead..

MARY

You deserve sympathy.

BRETT

What about him ?

MARY

I can't sympathise with someone who cannot forgive.

Brett ponders for a moment, then speaks.

BRETT

Maybe, you could melt his heart, persuade him to forgive me.

Mary is puzzled by this.

MARY

Me - ?

BRETT

You are an attractive woman. You have a beautiful smile. All you need to do is, disarm him with beautiful smile of yours, and he's yours.

MARY

I could try, but I can't guarantee results.

BRETT

I would bless you for trying.

MARY

I'll give it a go.

BRETT

Thanks, Mary.

MARY
I will make an official request
to visit him.

She smiles at him.

He smiles back at her.

BRETT
If he could forgive me, it would
mean so much to me.

MARY
I'll try...

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Krause, seated, in front of a small desk/table, reading a letter from Mary.

It reads: "I have visited Brett Cherney, a man with an innocent pure soul of the deepest repentance, a sinner brought back into the fold of love, for whom I have the utmost sympathy. The only thing he needs now is your forgiveness. He is suffering from so much guilt and genuine sorrow over your plight. I sincerely believe, you forgiving him would not only transform him, but also lighten your own burden of grief. If you could see the light, see the way to forgive him, I would be most grateful, and I'm sure your forgiveness would benefit you as much as him. I have asked to visit you. Please, allow me to visit you."

Krause ponders for a moment, then looks at the attach photo of Mary, and appreciates she is an attractive woman.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Krause, waiting at a table.

A guard lets Mary in and guides her to Krause's table.

She smiles at Krause.

He half-smiles back, then suppresses his smile.

Mary sits down.

MARY
I'm so pleased you allowed me to
visit you.

KRAUSE
Well, um, I guess, I had to...

Mary smiles again.

MARY
Thank you.

Krause surveys her face and notes the features that make her attractive.

She smiles at him once more.

MARY

I went to see Brett...

KRAUSE

I know...

MARY

He needs you to forgive him...

KRAUSE

For murdering me - ?

MARY

Yes. He regrets it so much. He forgives you for killing him...

KRAUSE

- So, I should forgive him - ?

MARY

Please...

KRAUSE

Why should I ?

MARY

It would be nice. It would be kind. It would be...

KRAUSE

- Stupid. It would be stupid of me to forgive him...

MARY

Why do you think that ?

KRAUSE

Because hating him is all I've got left. I lost my life; I lost my wife; I lost everything.

MARY

If you forgive, you would gain his gratitude, you would gain his love.

KRAUSE

I don't want his love. I don't want his gratitude. I want nothing from him.

MARY

What do you want ?

KRAUSE

I wanna change my past. I wanna go back in time and not be murdered.

MARY

You know that is not possible. You haf-ta learn to compromise with your emotions, your hopes and desires...

KRAUSE

I have to compromise ?

MARY

You can't change your past, but you can change your future, with the right attitude...

KRAUSE

What would that be ?

MARY

Forgiveness...sublime, life-changing forgiveness...transformative, divine forgiveness...the best feeling in the world is when you forgive someone...

KRAUSE

Some things cannot be forgiven.

Mary sighs.

MARY

If only you could experience that feeling, you would change your mind.

KRAUSE

I'm not so sure about that. Can you forgive me, for not forgiving him ?

MARY

You must forgive him ?

KRAUSE

"Must - ?!" Must I ? Why ?

MARY

It would benefit you so much...

KRAUSE

That would be a selfish reason.

MARY

It would make Brett so happy.

KRAUSE

So, it's for his benefit, not mine...

MARY

- For both your benefit !

A beat.

KRAUSE

I can't do it...I simply can't do it.

Mary rises from her chair.

MARY

You disappoint me...

Krause sighs.

KRAUSE

I'm sorry...

MARY

I don't believe you are...

KRAUSE

You doubt my sincerity...?

She looks at him scornfully.

KRAUSE

You think you're better than me;
you think you're morally superior...

MARY

A man without forgiveness, has a heart
of stone.

KRAUSE

That is ridiculous !

MARY

One day, you will forgive him.

KRAUSE

I doubt it. - You're attracted to him,
aren't you ?

MARY

I'm attracted to his beautiful soul.

KRAUSE

You're attracted to him, physically...

Mary angrily shakes her head.

MARY

How dare you say that !

She leans on the table with both hands, to look down on him.

MARY

How dare you doubt my sincerity !
How dare you question my motives !
You disgust me !

She quickly turns around and walks to the door, to be let out by the
guard.

Krause sighs.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON - NIGHT

Conference room.

Krause, Brett and the mediator.

KRAUSE

Sometimes, you have no control
over your destiny, you have no

KRAUSE (cont'd)

say whatsoever. Things happen.
Other people decide your future,
not you...

MEDIATOR

If you don't like the way things
turned out, why didn't you take
control of the situation? Why
didn't you choose your own future?

KRAUSE

I wasn't allowed to.

MEDIATOR

You weren't "allowed to - ?!" Why
not?

KRAUSE

He bashed my brains in with a
baseball bat before I could do
anything.

BRETT

The past is determined. The future
is for grabs. The present is when
we determine the future. If we had
no control over our past, we should
have some control over our future.

KRAUSE

You determined my past and my future.
You didn't consult me about it.

BRETT

I want you to determine your own
future, now.

KRAUSE

How very considerate of you. I am allowed
to choose my future. The problem is,
my future has already been determined,
by my past.

MEDIATOR

You still have a chance to change
your future.

KRAUSE

My psychology says, no. My psychology
says my future has been determined by
my past. I can't change my psychology.
I can't change the way I think, which
was set in stone by the events of my
past, which he determined. He did this
to me. He made me a soul with only a past,
no present, and no future.

MEDIATOR

You gotta change your psychology. You
gotta change the way you think. You
gotta forge a new future for yourself.

KRAUSE

No, my destiny has been struck, and not by me - by him !

MEDIATOR

That approach to life, never gets you anywhere.

KRAUSE

You are so morally censorious.

MEDIATOR

I'm trying to make you take some responsibility for your past, present and future.

KRAUSE

He owns my past...

MEDIATOR

Well, don't let him own your future.

Krause ponders this idea.

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON CELL - NIGHT

In his cell, Krause is seated at the desk/table and is filming himself making a video diary, with the equipment set up for him.

KRAUSE

Did I ever have a chance, an opportunity, to take the initiative ? To take control of my own destiny ? I allowed myself to be cheated out of a decent life. Brett Cherney took all the choice away from me. I have let him dominate my life, my past, my present...my future, unless I reclaim it from him. How can I choose my own future ? At the moment, I just don't know. The same old tune keeps repeating itself, - I gotta break the cycle somehow, before I cease to exist, I just become part of someone else's story...I gotta find a way, somehow...

CUT TO:

INT: PRISON - NIGHT

The office of the GOVERNOR.

Brett standing, with a guard at each side.

The governor seated behind a desk.

GOVERNOR

Well, Cherney, the recommendation is, your early release, due to good behaviour, and your good progress in the restorative justice process. You have demonstrated genuine remorse, and are now, a reformed character. I wish you all the best in your new

GOVERNOR (cont')

life.

BRETT

Thank you, sir.

EXT: PRISON GATES - NIGHT

Brett is let out of the gates by the guards.

Just outside, he is greeted by Brent and Mary.

Brett and Brent hug and embrace.

Brent lets Brett go.

Brett is hugged and embraced by Mary.

BRETT

Let's go home.

Brent gets into the front of the car, Brett and Mary into the back.

The car drives off.

INT: CAR - NIGHT

As Brent drives in the front of the car, Brett looks out the window at the back, towards the prison building, as it becomes smaller. Brett then turns to Mary.

BRETT

He's still in there, you know.

MARY

I know.

BRETT

I feel bad about that.

MARY

You gotta concentrate on yourself.

BRETT

I won't forget him.

MARY

You've become a very decent, caring person.

BRETT

Thanks.

EXT: HOUSE - NIGHT

The car draws up outside Brett's place.

Brett and Mary get out.

Brent opens the window of the car and speaks to them.

They go over to him.

BRENT
See you, tomorrow..night.

BRETT
Thanks, bro.

Brent windows up the window.

The car drives off.

Mary turns to speak to Brett.

MARY
I got it all done up nicely, for
you.

BRETT
Thanks..

Mary opens the front door and they go inside.

INT: HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary and Brett go through to the living room, where there is a banner
saying, "Welcome home, Brett". Brett sees the banner and smiles.

BRETT
I didn't expect that...

MARY
I wanted to make it nice for you.

BRETT
You done a great job.

MARY
I also got a nice coffin for you
to sleep in, during the day.

She takes the sheet off, covering the coffin.

BRETT
You think of everything.

MARY
I want you to have the best life
possible.

Brett laughs.

He goes to inspect the coffin and feels its inner lining.

BRETT
Well, I will certainly be comfortable
in that.

Brett moves back towards Mary.

BRETT
You know, I'm a little puzzled, why
you should be doing all this for me ?
I am a convicted murderer and one of

BRETT (cont'd)
the undead..

MARY
I saw in you, a soul in anguish,
a soul desperate for comfort and
compassion; a soul I could reach
out to, and, redeem.

BRETT
"Redeem - ?2

MARY
I knew there was a decent person,
deep inside of you.

BRETT
You have been, so kind to me.

MARY
You are the most genuine person
I have ever met. You deserve
a second chance at life.

BRETT
I just couldn't get things right,
the first time round.

MARY
I understand...

She looks at Brett.

MARY
I've never met a man like you before.

BRETT
Well, I am, unusual.

MARY
You are..extraordinary.

Brett looks at Mary.

MARY
I don't know - it's strange...I think
I have some feelings for you. You're
everything I could hope for in a man.

BRETT
I am one of the, undead.

MARY
That doesn't disqualify you...

BRETT
Doesn't it - ?

She moves closer to him and touches his cheek with her hand. She strokes his cheek.

Brett is immobile, and only reacts a little to her touch.

MARY

I feel..attracted to you.

She moves in for a kiss. Brett does not move an inch.

She kisses him and holds the kiss for a few seconds, whilst he is still.

When she breaks off the kiss, she looks at him.

BRETT

I...I don't know what to say.

MARY

I love you.

She kisses him. This time he engages more and the kissing becomes mutual.

CUT TO:

INT: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Some months later.

Brett and Mary are seated on the sofa.

BRETT

You know, I can't help thinking about Jim, rotting away in that prison. I gotta do whatever I can to get him out, as soon as we can.

MARY

You're such a caring, unselfish person, thinking of him..

BRETT

I will request to visit him.

INT: PRISON - NIGHT

Conference room.

Krause, waiting at a table.

A guard shows Brett, as a visitor, to Krause's table.

BRETT

Thanks for letting me see you..

Krause sighs.

KRAUSE

Didn't exactly have much choice. If I had said, "No," they would've put more time on my tariff.

A beat.

KRAUSE

So, what do you wanna talk about ?

BRETT

You...

KRAUSE

Me - ? There's not much to be said,
about me. You got a great life. I got
a lousy life.

BRETT

It's not a life. We're both dead. We're
both the undead. We have an existence,
not a life.

KRAUSE

Life after death ain't all it's cracked
up to be. Sometimes, I think I'd rather
be dead, totally, completely dead. Gone.
No spirit. Nothing. Dust. Ashes. But,
that special soil brought us both back
to life, unfortunately.

BRETT

I was given a second chance, at..existing.

KRAUSE

Good for you. Some people get everything;
some people get nothing. You got everything;
I got nothing.

BRETT

It's the way it is.

KRAUSE

It's unfair...

BRETT

Of course, it is. I would much prefer
things to be more equal, between us.

KRAUSE

Game, set and match to you. I lose. You
win. No-one cares about losers. They only
care about winners. You're the winner; I'm
the loser.

BRETT

That's the way things turned out.

KRAUSE

What I'm worried about, is the distortion
of morality: bad people get all the sympathy;
good people get all the blame. It should be
the other way round: good people should get
all the sympathy; bad people should get all
the blame. Why isn't the world like that ?
Why is the world the very opposite ? Proper
morality got flushed down the toilet.

BRETT

I'm sorry...

KRAUSE

You're sorry. Good for you.

A beat.

BRETT
I wanna help you, get out-ta here.

KRAUSE
How ?

BRETT
I'm getting married.

KRAUSE (sarcastically)
You're getting married..

BRETT
Mary's gonna marry me.

KRAUSE
Bully for you. It's amazing how things turned out. Everything is just hunky-dory for you. Everything is just shit for me.

BRETT
I got lucky..

KRAUSE
...Which means, I got, unlucky.

BRETT
Look, -

KRAUSE
Don't "Look" me ! You owe me big time.

BRETT
That's why I wanna help you. I'm gonna invite you to my wedding. You should get night release for a night..

Krause looks at Brett with some anger.

BRETT
...You would be my best man...and you would publicly say, you forgive me.

KRAUSE
Me, forgive you ?! I can never forgive you.

BRETT
I know that, but you have to publicly say you do.

KRAUSE
That would be, insincere.

BRETT
I know. It don't matter to me, but it would satisfy Mary and the prison authorities. They would consider that to be your full participation in the restorative justice program. They'll take years off your sentence.

Krause ponders this for a moment.

KRAUSE

As long as you understand, it is, insincere...?

BRETT

I accept that. It's the public display of forgiveness that's so important, to people.

KRAUSE

Okay, I'll go along with that.

CUT TO:

EXT: PRISON GATES - NIGHT

Krause is accompanied by two guards and a SUPERVISOR as he leaves the prison, in handcuffs.

Brett, Brent and Mary are there to meet him.

Krause looks at the supervisor and guards.

KRAUSE

I am not dangerous.

SUPERVISOR

It's a precaution against you escaping.

KRAUSE

There's no escape for me. My prison is in my mind.

MARY

It's all psychological. Once he learns to forgive, he might forget...then, he can be free.

INT: CAR - NIGHT

Brent driving. Brett in the front passenger seat.

Krause and Mary on the back seats.

KRAUSE

The past is such a burden.

MARY

You gotta, accept your fate. You cannot change what happened.

KRAUSE

It's alright for you to say that. Your fate is better than mine.

MARY

I can't help that.

KRAUSE

So what qualifies you to preach to me, tell me what I should or should

KRAUSE (cont'd)
 not accept ? What gives you the right
 to moralise over me ? You wouldn't
 change places with me, would you ?

MARY
 Of course not, but, I wish to believe,
 if I was in your situation, I would be
 coping with it better than you are, at
 the moment.

KRAUSE
 You believe all sorts-a crap.

Mary turns to look at Krause.

MARY
 Are you gonna forgive him, or not ?

KRAUSE
 I have to forgive him, or I will be
 punished.

MARY
 You forgive him of your own free will.

Krause scoffs at this idea.

KRAUSE
 My "own free will" - ? I have no free
 will...I always do what I'm told...

Krause turns around and looks back at the following car through the back
 window.

KRAUSE
 They're watching us...

MARY
 They're monitoring you, to make sure
 you do and say the right things.

KRAUSE
 The past is a dungeon; you hold the key.

MARY
 There is no escape, except forgiveness.
 Forgive and forget; then the past, will
 dissolve. You know what we should do ?
 To help you, psychologically ?

KRAUSE
 What ?

MARY
 You paint a watercolour of your past.
 You paint it as a dungeon, containing
 yourself and the life-changing moment,
 your death. Then, when it's done, you
 pour water over the image, and let it
 all dissolve to nothing.

KRAUSE
"Nothing...?"

MARY
Nothing...

KRAUSE
I'll try that...

MARY
Good.

EXT: HOUSE - DAY

The two cars draw up outside Brett's place.

Brett gets out of his car.

The supervisor and the two guards get out of the second car.

The guards go to the back doors of Brett's car.

One of the guards opens up the door to let Krause out.

Brent opens the front passenger door of Brett's car and gets out.

Krause gets out of the car.

The second guard opens the back door of Brett's car to let Mary out.

All the doors are closed shut in quick succession.

The guards move to either side of Krause.

Brett points to the front door of his house, and the others follow him.

He opens up the front door. They all go inside. The front door closes.

INT: HOUSE - DAY

Brett leads them through to the living room.

BRETT (to Krause)
Please, sit down.

Krause sits on an armchair, as directed by Brett.

Brett sits on the sofa, joined by Mary.

Brent goes over to the other armchair and sits down.

SUPERVISOR (to guard)
Fetch us some chairs...

The guard looks at Brett, and then at Brent.

BRETT (pointing)
In the next room, over there...

The guard goes into the next room to fetch some chairs.

He sets two down.

The supervisor and the other guard sit on the two chairs.

The guard then goes into the next room to fetch a chair for himself and sits.

A beat.

SUPERVISOR

Well, this is nice.

BRETT

Sure. I got my brother, my fiancée,
and the man I murdered, with me here
today...

BRETT

Tonight...

BRETT

Tonight - the man I hope to call,
"friend".

Krause shakes his head.

KRAUSE

Why should we be friends ?

BRETT

Good question. I guess, to help me,
to help you...

KRAUSE

- To make you feel better...?

BRETT

Maybe...

KRAUSE

So, it's all for your benefit - ?

BRETT

Not all...

KRAUSE

What do I get out of it ?

MARY

You got the knowledge you have
forgiven someone.

KRAUSE

What's so wonderful about that ?

MARY

It will make you feel good.

KRAUSE

I'm not so sure about that.

MARY

Give it a try. You might enjoy the
feeling of forgiving someone.

Krause scoffs.

KRAUSE

This whole restorative justice program, it's always much more for the benefit of the offender than it is for the victim; and if the victim isn't happy with the outcome, he can go fuck himself.

BRETT

It's not like that.

KRAUSE

It sure is.

SUPERVISOR

That is too negative...

KRAUSE

- But it is the truth.

A beat.

KRAUSE

Life has to open up new avenues for me. Can't go down the same old road, over and over again. Stuck in a one-way, into a cul-de-sac. I always end up in the same place. The doors close on me. There is no escape.

MARY

That's your mind closing off any route out-ta there.

KRAUSE

There is no way out.

MARY

There's always a way out. That's what it says in any building, on any system. "Way out".

BRETT

There was a way in; so, there must be a way out.

KRAUSE

"Must be - ?" I doubt that.

A beat.

MARY

You gotta get more out-ta life.

KRAUSE

I'm dead...I'm undead.

MARY

Brett's undead, and he gets more out-ta life.

KRAUSE

That's because he's got you.

MARY

What are you saying - ?

KRAUSE

I need you.

MARY

You can't have me. I'm gonna be Brett's wife. I'm his companion.

KRAUSE

I need someone like you.

MARY

Maybe, you do...

KRAUSE

You got any ideas - ?

MARY

Well, I got a sister.

KRAUSE

Is she like you ?

MARY

We are, similar.

KRAUSE

As tall as you, as pretty as you ?

MARY

More or less. She is not an exact copy. She has her own life.

KRAUSE

Nobody wants to know me. I have zero chance of female company.

Brett joins in.

BRETT

The love of a good woman, can transform a man.

KRAUSE

No-one has offered to transform me.

MARY

That's because you are, disagreeable.

KRAUSE

What does that mean ?

MARY

It means, you disagree with people, all the time. You're angry, bitter, resentful..disagreeable.

KRAUSE

Surely, that means, I am capable of disagreeing...? That's a good thing -

MARY

- Not if you do it all the time. If you forgive Brett, maybe I could ask my sister to, consider you.

KRAUSE

"...consider" me - ?

MARY

...As someone she would take an interest in, someone she could redeem.

KRAUSE

You women are into redeeming men...

MARY

Why not ? Men cannot redeem themselves.

KRAUSE

Why is that ?

MARY

They don't have any redemptive power. Women do...

Krause looks puzzled.

MARY

...It's about empathy. Women have it; men don't.

KRAUSE

Redeeming men makes you feel good.

MARY

It sure does.

KRAUSE

So, you're gonna marry my murderer...?

MARY

I sure am.

KRAUSE

Don't you think, there's something immoral in that ?

MARY

No, not at all.

KRAUSE

I don't understand...

MARY

He has repented his crime. He has shown genuine remorse.

Krause looks unimpressed and dismissive.

KRAUSE

So, it's alright to murder someone,
if you repent afterwards ?

MARY

It is...

KRAUSE

What about the murdered person ?

MARY

He has no say in it, because he's
dead.

KRAUSE

But I'm not ! I am undead, and I
plead the case for the murdered
person. The remorse of the murderer
does nothing for the murdered person.
The penitence of the murderer is for
the benefit of the murderer, alone.
The whole of the restorative justice
program does nothing for the murdered
person.

MARY

You don't get it, do you - ?

KRAUSE

What ?

MARY

The nature of forgiveness...

KRAUSE

- You can't forgive me, for not
forgiving him.

MARY

I believe in the redemptive power,
of forgiveness. If you can forgive
him, you'll start to forget why you
hate him, what he did to you, how it
changed your life, everything; you
will forget, all of it. Then, it's
gone; you will be free. The past
will just dissolve.

KRAUSE

What about that painting ?

MARY

That might help.

Mary gets up and goes into the next room.

Brett looks puzzled. He looks at Krause.

They look towards the next room.

Mary returns with a portable easel, and some watercolour paints. She puts
them down on the table. She then goes back into the next room, as the

others look on with curiosity.

Mary returns with a canvas, a few paint-brushes, a palette and a clear jar with some water in it, to clean the brushes.

MARY (to Krause)
Let's paint your past.

She puts the canvas on the easel.

MARY
Come over here.

Krause gets up and goes over to her.

She hands him a paint-brush.

MARY
Paint.

He looks at the canvas and the tubes of watercolour paints.

He looks at Mary.

MARY
Paint an image of your past, the
day you died.

Krause starts to paint the scene of his death, in Brett's office at the diner. He paints Brett hitting his head with a baseball bat and the start of him collapsing.

When he has finished, he stands aside for Mary to look at the painting.

MARY
That's pretty good. Now, use this
brush...

She hands him a large brush.

MARY
Dip it in the water.

Krause dips the large brush in the jar of water.

MARY
Dissolve your past...

KRAUSE
If only it were that easy...

MARY
Do it.

Krause applies the brush to the canvas and sees a part of his image dissolve.

MARY
...And some more, until the whole
image of your past dissolves into
nothing.

Krause repeats his actions until the whole canvas is just a jumble of colours with no distinct image on it.

MARY

What do you see ?

KRAUSE

It's a mess.

MARY

It's not you any more.

KRAUSE

It's just a blur.

MARY

You can't see anything there. That is the general mass of humanity. You don't have an individual past. You are part of the total mass of people who died at some time in the past, for some unknown reason, the collective past of mankind.

Krause nods in partial agreement, but still has doubts.

MARY

Did that help ?

KRAUSE

A little. I still have doubts...

MARY

To complete the cure, you must forgive Brett.

KRAUSE

"Must ?!" Why must I forgive him ?

MARY

For your own peace of mind.

KRAUSE

I can't do it, to make him feel better.

MARY

Do it to make you feel better.

KRAUSE

I'm not sure it will make me feel better.

MARY

You won't know, unless you try.

KRAUSE

This is a trick.

MARY

"A trick ?" How is it a trick ?

KRAUSE

You get me to forgive him..I might

KRAUSE (cont'd)
regret forgiving him, afterwards. If
I forgive him, I can't take it back.
It's once or never.

MARY
Do it ! You'll regret not doing it.

KRAUSE
I don't know what to do.

He goes back to his chair and sits down.

Mary goes over to him.

MARY
You are so stubborn.

KRAUSE
This is the only thing I got left,
my only weapon, my only bargaining
chip, with-holding my forgiveness.

MARY
That is all wrong. You shouldn't see
things like that. The noble nature of
forgiveness is divine. This is not
about your position in our family.
This is about love.

KRAUSE
It's not just about me. The murdered
person has no advocate; I am his voice.
The murdered person cannot forgive his
murderer.

MARY
That makes you very special. You are
in the unique position of being able
to forgive your murderer.

KRAUSE
Why should I ?

MARY
- Because you can.

She moves away from Krause, as he ponders his choice.

MARY
Maybe, you need a kiss and a cuddle
to melt your frozen heart.

Mary takes out her smartphone and calls up her sister, DIANE, who appears
on the screen of the phone.

MARY
Di, I need your help. I got a guy
here, who needs redemption...

DIANE (on phone)
Er, Mary, I was gonna come round

DIANE (on phone) (cont'd)
in an hour or so, for the wedding..

MARY
I need you here, now. It's Jim Krause, you know, the guy my fiance killed; I need you to unlock him, so's he can be the best man at our wedding. The plan is, you get him to forgive Brett, and then, the wedding can go ahead. A lot depends on you, persuading Jim Krause to seek his own redemption by the act of forgiveness. Please, come now.

DIANE (on phone)
Okay; I'll be with you in a few minutes.

Diane closes the call, and her face disappears from the screen.

Mary shuts her smartphone.

MARY (to Krause)
She's even prettier than me, and more patient...She'll be here soon.

Mary sits down on the sofa.

They wait for Diane to arrive.

The supervisor speaks to Krause.

SUPERVISOR
You know, it would help your application for early release if you were to engage fully in the restorative justice program by forgiving your murderer.

KRAUSE
I know.

SUPERVISOR
Maybe, Mary's sister Diane, can help you...

KRAUSE
Maybe...

Later:

Diane arrives, greeted by Mary at the front door, with a hug and a kiss.

MARY
He's a difficult one. As you know, I am spoken for, engaged to Brett; so, I need you to show him some kindness and affection.

DIANE
I'll do what I can.

Mary leads Diane through to the living room, where she sees Krause on an armchair.

MARY

There he is.

DIANE

Mister Krause...?

KRAUSE

That's me.

DIANE

I'm Diane, Mary's sister.

Diane extends her hand for Krause to shake.

KRAUSE

Nice to meet you, Diane.

Mary takes Diane aside, to speak to her.

MARY

Us pretty women have a weapon. Men look at us, they stare at us; they can't take their eyes off us. We have a duty to use our powers of attraction to good purpose. If we can persuade a bitter resentful guy, to overcome his sense of betrayal, to reconcile with his past, achieve his own redemption, we have done good work, God's work. You can redeem him.

DIANE

Okay.

Diane goes over to Krause and smiles at him.

KRAUSE

You got a nice smile, Diane.

DIANE

Thanks.

Diane draws up a chair to sit near Krause.

DIANE

You know, I can feel your anguish. The only way to find release, from your pain, is to forgive those who have done you wrong, those who have harmed you...

KRAUSE

He murdered me...

DIANE

...even those who have murdered you.

She smiles at him again.

DIANE

If you forgive him, I would kiss you.

KRAUSE
I'd want more than that..

DIANE
What ?

KRAUSE
I'd want you to sympathise with me.
I'd want us to have, a relationship.

DIANE
That would be nice.

KRAUSE
Do you want to seduce me ?

DIANE
It's not about seducing anybody.
It's not about seduction at all.
It's about seeing something more
in the form of female beauty than
an opportunity for lust. It's about
beauty, the beauty in a pretty woman's
smile, the possibility of redemption,
your redemption.

KRAUSE
What about an un-pretty woman's smile ?

MARY
That don't work so well.

KRAUSE
It don't - ?

MARY
No, it don't.

KRAUSE
Why not ?

MARY
Because an un-pretty woman cannot hold
a man's attention.

KRAUSE
That makes sense. I am an innocent in
these matters. Ain't no design on my part.
Never was..

MARY
If you can forgive him, you might forget
the whole thing. You might be liberated
from your past.

DIANE
I could hold your hand, and kiss you.

KRAUSE
The promise, even the possibility
of oblivion, being able to forget
what happened to me, is so strong

KRAUSE (cont'd)
a motivation, I will surely accept
your offer.

MARY (to Diane)
You're melting him.

KRAUSE (to Diane)
I am putty in your hands.

DIANE
Let me kiss you...

Diane leans over to kiss Krause, and hold the kiss for a few seconds.

Diane then releases the kiss and moves her head away from Krause, who smiles.

KRAUSE
You are, delicious.

DIANE
Thanks. You reckon you can forgive
Brett now ?

KRAUSE
I'm getting there.

MARY
Forgiveness is essential for the
functioning of mankind. Forgiveness
is the purest form of love. What is
our purpose on this planet ? To serve
others. You should know, I disapprove
of selfishness.

KRAUSE
Morality is not convenient. Morality
is absolute.

MARY
Forgiveness is morality.

Diane looks at Krause.

DIANE (to Krause)
I see you as a person with a special
soul, someone who can transcend his
past and change his future, someone
I could love.

KRAUSE
I cannot refuse such a beautiful
lady. Brett, the wedding can go
ahead. I will make a public show
of forgiving you.

BRETT
I murdered you.

MARY
God's forgiveness is infinite,

MARY (cont'd)
for the soul that repents.

KRAUSE
Maybe, one day, I could marry Diane.

DIANE
Maybe...

KRAUSE
You have persuaded me. Let's get
this wedding under way.

MARY
Okay. I'll call up the pastor.

Later:

The guards undo Krause's handcuffs.

Krause gets up and goes over to Diane.

KRAUSE
Diane, you're a mighty sweet lady.

DIANE
Why, thank you...

KRAUSE
- Jim...

DIANE
Jim...

The supervisor switches on her mobile phone, on the video function and starts to film.

The PASTOR enters the room with a bible.

Mary gives a ring to Brett, who gives it to Krause.

BRETT
You are the Best Man.

Krause looks at the ring for a moment, and then looks at Diane.

KRAUSE (to Diane)
One day...?

DIANE
Maybe...

Later:

The wedding ceremony is in progress.

The pastor speaks to Krause.

PASTOR
The ring...

Krause hands the ring to Brett.

The pastor turns to Brett.

PASTOR
Say after me: "with this ring,
I thee wed..."

Brett puts the ring on Mary's finger.

BRETT
With this ring, I thee wed...

Later:

PASTOR
I pronounce you, Man and Wife...
You may kiss the bride.

Brett kisses Mary.

The congregation applauds.

Later:

Krause and Diane are drinking champagne, near a table.

KRAUSE
I gotta do my speech.

DIANE
You will forgive him - ?

KRAUSE
Of course...

Later:

The congregation is seated around a set of tables.

Krause is about to address them.

The supervisor is filming the event on her mobile phone.

KRAUSE
Let me say, I have known Brett for
a long time, and I have forgiven
him for...murdering me...I do this
without duress and of my own free
will. I wish him and Mary happiness...

Krause looks towards Diane.

KRAUSE
I did it...I forgave him...

THE END

