

COMEDY NIGHT AT THE CRYPT

Written by

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C O N T A C T

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FADE IN:

INT. COMEDY CLUB GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

RILEY O'REGAN (25), a determined, highly intelligent comedian, paces in an empty room near the stage. A small intercom hangs on a wire in the upper corner. The snack table has broken cookie crumbs, two empty bottles of water, and a burnt, empty Mr. Coffee maker.

The club owner, MAC (30s; male), sounds like he's in a control room on another planet.

MAC (V.O.)  
O'Regan, you're on in five.

Riley is startled and stares at the intercom in fright.

RILEY  
Thanks, Mac. How's the house? Ya know Margaret Cho, Steve Martin, and Robin Williams got their starts...

MAC (V.O.)  
(interrupts)  
On in four.  
(beat)  
Just kidding. The house is great. They'll love ya. Break a femur.

We hear a phone ring in Mac's control room, while Riley looks at the cookie crumbs and the coffee maker.

RILEY  
Can't believe you're throwing this all away for med school. You're going to operate on broken funny bones? Perform unnecessary humor-ectomies on Republicans?

Riley hears footsteps stomping toward the door.

Mac swings open the door wearing a blue (medical) face mask and carrying one in his hand for Riley, who continues telling jokes.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Get a job at the Bologna and Mayo Clinic?

Mac's eyes tear up, and he looks down.

Riley's voice slows and turns sad.

RILEY (CONT'D)

This was my chance to defeat my glossophobia.

MAC

Glosso-what?

RILEY

Glossophobia. Fear of public speaking.

Mac laughs.

MAC

Boy, did you pick the wrong career! They shut us down. Cops are ushering the audience out. Sorry, Riley.

Mac steps to hug Riley, but she turns away.

RILEY

I'll never know if I could have done it.

MAC

We'll open back up soon. In a couple of weeks, this will all be blown over. In the meantime, practice your act on smaller crowds to gain confidence.

Mac hands Riley a blue mask.

MAC (CONT'D)

Go out the stage door if you want. I'll call ya, okay?

RILEY

A couple of weeks! What's a couple of weeks? One rent check. One electric bill. Water, sewer, garbage.

(beat)

Probably would have died on stage anyway.

(serious)

Does it hurt this badly if you die laughing?

Riley turns to see that Mac is gone.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Picked the wrong boyfriend, too!

Riley stares sadly at her blue mask.

INT. COMEDY CLUB STAGE - NIGHT

Riley trudges across a dark stage carrying a backpack and her blue mask.

She stops to stare at an empty nightclub. Her legs shake uncontrollably, and she can barely move. She stutters as she speaks.

RILEY  
The great C... C... Carol Burnett,  
and a lot of comics after her, said  
that "Out of tragedy comes c...  
c... comedy!"  
(sadly)  
I think it's the other way around.  
(continues walking)  
C... couple of weeks. Guess I can  
use the p... p... practice.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Riley is dressed in a black pantsuit with dark-rimmed eyeglasses. She carries her backpack and holds a one-page resume. She stares up at the sign: "Cox Funeral Parlor. Five generations. Cox is the best!"

SUPER: "Six months later."

She trudges to the front door, mumbling.

RILEY  
C... Cox is the best? That's  
grammatically incorrect. Should  
read, Cox are the best.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Riley enters a drab, dark, traditional funeral parlor. One sign points to the "Office" and one to the "Chapel."

Soft Gregorian chant music plays in the background.

She takes one step toward the office, then turns to the Chapel.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

We see a coffin in the front of the Chapel surrounded by flowers.

RILEY  
 (to herself)  
 Don't be afraid. D... Don't be  
 afraid!

MR. ALISTAIRE COX (75), a stuffy, huge, solemn gentleman in a dark suit with a white carnation and thick eyeglasses, comes up quietly behind Riley and taps her on the shoulder, causing her to jump.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 Jesus!

She turns to see Mr. Cox.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 Just telling him or her... Or they,  
 that there's nothing to be afraid  
 of, if Jesus is in their heart.

MR. COX  
 I'm Alistaire Cox. Must be an  
 applicant for the event manager  
 job. Looked like you saw a ghost!  
 Always stutter.

RILEY  
 Just when I'm n... nervous.

Riley throws out a hand for a shake, but Mr. Cox turns around. She nods "yes" like she had seen a ghost.

MR. COX  
 The office is this way. There's  
 nothing to be nervous about.

RILEY  
 (mumbles)  
 Small crowds, I hope.

Mr. Cox keeps walking but turns his head slightly.

MR. COX  
 Him or her or they? What did you  
 mean by they?

RILEY  
 Never mind, Sir. Assumed you have a  
 "Don't ash, don't tell" policy for  
 cremations.

Mr. Cox grunts.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 No gender-bender jokes. Got it.

MR. COX  
 And your Jesus comment was  
 acceptable in private, of course,  
 but we're tolerant of all Christian  
 religions here at Cox.

RILEY  
 (rolls eyes, mumbles)  
 Yes. The sign out front says it  
 all.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MR. COX  
 What's that, dear?

Mr. Cox leads Riley to a comfortable seat in a plush office.

RILEY  
 (loud)  
 Five generations! Wow. Dying makes  
 a good living.

Riley hands Mr. Cox her one-page resume.

MR. COX  
 Why do you want to be our event  
 manager, Ms... O'Regan?

Riley sits uncomfortably in the chair before answering in the  
 form of questions.

RILEY  
 All I dreamed of since I was a  
 little hellion?

Mr. Cox looks up from the resume and over his glasses.

MR. COX  
 It says here you tried your hand at  
 standup comedy. Any experience...

RILEY  
 (interrupting)  
 I had a fear of dying on stage.

MR. COX  
 A few online classes hardly qualify  
 as an associate's degree in  
 Mortuary Science.

Riley leans forward pleading for the job, as PRESTON COX  
 (26), a casually-dressed hunk, peeks in the office door.

RILEY  
 All I need is three weeks of actual  
 experience to graduate. I need a  
 job. I have no place to stay, and  
 I'll work my ass off for you.

PRESTON  
 Got a good feeling about this one,  
 Gramps!

Riley turns, embarrassed to see the handsome young man.

MR. COX  
 My grandson, Preston Cox. Please  
 meet...  
 (looks at the resume)  
 Riley O'Regan. But her resume...

PRESTON  
 Is as short as the staff around  
 here.

Riley smiles and stands to shake hands with Preston.

RILEY  
 Short as your staff?

Preston doesn't get the double meaning.

PRESTON  
 Help run the place, but I'm a med  
 student and not around as much.  
 Gramps badly needs the help.

RILEY  
 (mumbles)  
 Not another med student.

PRESTON  
 (to Mr. Cox)  
 She can stay in my studio.  
 (MORE)

PRESTON (CONT'D)

I'll be at the dorm or in the library anyway. Got the Sittmores viewing at two PM and quick turnaround for the Smythe's open casket at four.

(points to the Chapel)

I'll show Ms. O'Regan the ropes, but I gotta head back to the hospital.

Riley spins to shake hands with Mr. Cox and races out the door.

RILEY

Won't regret this, Mr. Cox.

Mr. Cox stares at the resume and looks up to heaven.

MR. COX

I already do.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Preston points around as he speaks.

PRESTON

Greet mourners at the door. The clergy show up a half-hour early. If it's Father O'Brien from Our Lady of Perpetual Guilt, remove his flask.

RILEY

I don't know. Call, genealogical courtesy.

PRESTON

'Cause you're both Irish?

Preston races to the casket. Riley follows, mumbling.

RILEY

Both are in serious trouble if we get caught!

PRESTON

Closed casket. Face blown apart by a shotgun.

RILEY

Mob hit?

PRESTON

Wife says he was cleaning his gun.

RILEY

Or gunning for the cleaning lady,  
huh?

Preston continues like he didn't hear her.

PRESTON

Lucinda Brown. You'll meet her in  
the Prep Room. Helps with embalming  
and makeup, but she didn't have  
much to go on with Mr. Sittmore.  
Toupee is still missing, so a  
closed casket. Got it?

RILEY

No rug on the man, so the lid's on  
the can. Got it!

PRESTON

Move those mourners out because we  
have Bishop Smythe's wife, open  
casket, right after. Swap out the  
flowers and casket. Sunday school  
teacher, so expect children. Got  
it?

RILEY

Swap the flowers and the wife for  
Smythe, and pop the lid for the  
kids. Got it!

Preston continues right along.

PRESTON

Then, you help Lucinda with the  
Long embalming. Funeral's at 11 AM  
tomorrow.

RILEY

How long is the embalming process?

PRESTON

Johnny Long was in the adult film  
business, but he deserves the same  
respect as any customer.

RILEY

Did he die of exhaustion?

PRESTON

(sternly)

Respect, Ms. O'Regan. You and Lucinda are alone tomorrow. Gotta take Gramps in for a few tests.

RILEY

(mumbles)

I couldn't pass a urine test!

Preston turns to her.

PRESTON

What was that, Ms. O'Regan?

RILEY

I said, "You deserve a rest." Don't worry about Lucinda and me.

Preston guides Riley to the Prep Room, behind the Chapel.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Preston marches into the Prep Room with Riley in tow. A beautiful African-American college student, LUCINDA BROWN (24) stands over the naked porn star who has a towel over an obvious erection. Lucinda wears an apron, gloves, and a face shield, but avoids eye contact with live people.

LUCINDA

Preston, you know I don't mind dead people, but I don't like live people.

RILEY

Anthropophobia? Fear of people?

LUCINDA

Just the live ones.

Riley stares at the dead body.

RILEY

Looks like this one's only part dead!

PRESTON

The condition is known as priapism, a post-mortem erection commonly observed in the corpses of men who have been hanged.

RILEY  
Looks well-hanged.

PRESTON  
Lucinda Brown, meet Riley O'Regan,  
our new events coordinator.

Riley reaches out to shake hands with Lucinda. Preston steps between them.

PRESTON (CONT'D)  
Gloves, an apron, and a face shield  
are mandatory, Ms. O'Regan. And it  
takes a while for Lucinda to warm  
up to live people.

Riley pulls her hand back as Lucinda laughs at the corpse.

LUCINDA  
Gloves especially. You have no idea  
where that thang has been.

Preston points to a back door, while he exits to the front.

PRESTON  
The main house is in the back. My  
studio apartment is back here. You  
can drop your things and get right  
to work.

RILEY  
Thanks for the...

Preston is gone, and Lucinda slowly makes eye contact with Riley.

LUCINDA  
You know that if Preston's ex,  
Darlene, comes back, you'll lose  
your job and his apartment in a  
heartbeat.

RILEY  
I took his girlfriend's job?

LUCINDA  
Left him to run the new crematorium  
down the street.

RILEY  
Asses to Ashes?

LUCINDA

That's Ashes to Ashes. I know.  
Catchy name, right? While you wait  
service, too.

RILEY

Did Preston take it hard when she  
left him?

LUCINDA

She could quote the Bible. She sang  
at the services, and she's a former  
swimsuit model. I hated her! What  
did she have that you don't?

Riley looks down at her body and laughs.

RILEY

Well, I can quote comedians.

LUCINDA

Sittmores' funeral at two? Better  
hustle.

Riley races out to the Chapel.

RILEY

No rug on the man, so the lid's on  
the can.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Riley rushes in to see FATHER O'BRIEN (60s) leaning on the  
closed casket and gulping from a large flask.

RILEY

You must be Father O'Brien from Our  
Lady of Perpetual...

The drunk priest puts his hand out to shake, but it's  
noticeably off-center from Riley, who reaches in and shakes  
his hand and removes his flask with her other hand.

Father O'Brien looks surprised and slurs his words from an  
"s" to a "sh" sound.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Shacrificsh? Shervish?

Riley and the priest pick up a flyer for the service that  
reads: "Mr. Sylvester Sittmore..." as the priest burps.

RILEY

Guilt! You're from Our Lady of  
Perpetual Guilt! I'm Riley O'Brien.  
First day. Hope you're not here for  
the Sittmore service?

The priest struggles to read the flyer.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Shylvesh... Shyleshter...

Riley guides the priest to a chair in the corner as CINNAMON  
JONES (30s), a stunning woman, enters wearing a sleek black  
dress and sunglasses.

RILEY

Mrs. Sittsmore, sorry for your  
loss.

CINNAMON

Cinnamon Jones, the housekeeper.

Father O'Brien's eyes open like he's seen a ghost.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Shimmonin?

MRS. SITTMORE (50s) enters wearing a long black leather coat,  
a black brimmed hat, and sunglasses.

RILEY

Please come in. Sorry for your  
loss.

The priest stands.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Mrs. Shitmore, show nice to she...

Mrs. Sittmore glares at the priest, then Cinnamon, and then  
Riley before producing a shotgun from under her coat.

Father O'Brien produces a second flask from his back pocket  
before sitting down again and chugging the booze.

RILEY

Closed casket, just like you...

Mrs. Sittmore fires the shotgun at Cinnamon, who dives to the  
floor.

MRS. SITTMORE

Not my first mistake!

Riley runs behind the casket and flips open the lid for protection.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Marrying a guy named Shitmore?

Mrs. Sittmore aims at the priest before turning and firing at the casket, as two uniformed Police Officers (#1, male 30s; and #2, female, 30s) race in to restrain Mrs. Sittmore.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
That's all the evidence we need.

POLICE OFFICER #2  
It could have been a disaster!

Riley looks around at the damage.

RILEY  
Could have been?

Lucinda pokes her head in from the door to the Prep Room.

LUCINDA  
Bishop Smythe's wife is next.

LATER

The two-door casket is closed (by mistake).

Riley stands solemnly at the entrance to the Chapel as BISHOP SMYTHE (60s) leads in five Adults (30s-40s) and six Children (5-15).

RILEY  
Welcome. So sorry about your loss.  
Bishop Smythe, I understand you'll  
be performing the service?

The young children run to the casket, more curious than solemn.

BISHOP SMYTHE  
The funeral service is tomorrow at  
my church. This is a viewing for my  
dearly departed wife's family and  
friends who are not of our faith.

Riley turns her head, confused. She whispers to the Bishop.

RILEY  
You mean, they're not invited to  
the service?

BISHOP SMYTHE  
 Heavens no! We have to draw the  
 line somewhere. Filthy heathens  
 have to say their goodbyes here!

Riley's eyes open in disbelief.

The Bishop glances at the casket and becomes furious.

BISHOP SMYTHE (CONT'D)  
 I said open casket!

Riley runs to the casket while apologizing.

RILEY  
 So sorry. I'll correct that  
 immediately.

The children look on with morbid curiosity.

Riley looks at each half of the coffin. She picks one side,  
 and closing her eyes, she opens the lid, turns, and races  
 back to the Bishop.

The children freeze, stunned, then begin chuckling.

The Bishop stomps toward the casket with Riley following.

His eyes show fright and disgust as he sees his dead wife's  
 dress pulled up to reveal fishnet stockings and garter belts.

Everyone turns to the Bishop, who is too stunned for words.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 I... I...

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - NIGHT

Riley and Lucinda drink a bottle of tequila each and play  
 ring-toss with Johnny Long (covered by a sheet).

LUCINDA  
 Your idea? The fishnet stockings,  
 too?

RILEY  
 Guess so.

LUCINDA  
 And you didn't remember which side  
 of the coffin to open?

RILEY

My first day! I was just trying to  
have a little fun!

LUCINDA

What?

RILEY

Putting the fun back in funerals?  
My Irish relatives had drunken  
wakes that went on for days.

LUCINDA

Like Father O'Brien.

RILEY

His mourning never stops.

LUCINDA

Wow! Good catchphrase!

(beat)

Except your ass is going to be  
fired when Preston and the old man  
find out what happened today.

RILEY

I'll find other work.

LUCINDA

The new crematorium is still  
hiring. Looking for oven operators.  
Can't burn 'em fast enough?

RILEY

How much would I urn? Get it? U-r-  
n.

Riley finally gets a ringer on the corpse at the same time  
they hear a KNOCK at the back door.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Ringer.

Lucinda whispers.

LUCINDA

Shit! It's Preston.

They hide the tequila under Johnny's sheet, toss the rings,  
and place a bedpan over Johnny's erection.

Preston steps in with a half-smile on his face.

PRESTON  
Evening ladies.

Riley is defensive.

RILEY  
I can explain...

PRESTON  
The police captain called me to  
thank me for apprehending Mrs.  
Sittsmore.

Preston looks around.

RILEY  
Really? And the Bishop?

PRESTON  
Wants to go closed casket at his  
church tomorrow, but didn't say  
much else.

LUCINDA  
Closed casket. Good choice.

Riley shrugs.

RILEY  
Fifty, fifty. Who knew?

Preston sniffs the air.

PRESTON  
What's that smell?

RILEY  
New embalming fluid. Should  
probably order a few more cases, I  
mean, barrels.

PRESTON  
Anyway. Glad it went well. Only two  
today, and one tomorrow. I don't  
know how long we'll be able to keep  
you both on if business doesn't  
improve.

Riley winks at Lucinda.

RILEY  
Want us to rub somebody out for ya?

Preston ignores the comment and stares at the bedpan on Johnny Long.

PRESTON  
This poor fellow didn't want a  
service. Probably no family!

Riley's eyes open wide. She races to put an arm around Preston.

RILEY  
What if we pack the house?!

LUCINDA  
Great for business.

PRESTON  
I've got big exams tomorrow, and  
Gramps needs to rest up. Neither of  
us...

RILEY  
We'll get some mourners in here.

LUCINDA  
Leave it to us.

Preston pauses for a moment, looking up to heaven.

PRESTON  
A big funeral would be a godsend.

Preston shakes his head with a smile as he starts to exit.

PRESTON (CONT'D)  
Just a few mourners would mean a  
lot to him and the business.

Riley pats Preston on the back as he leaves.

RILEY  
Rest assure. We're doing this for  
Cox.

Preston exits.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
We've gotta lot of work to do. No  
one sent a single flower  
arrangement.

Lucinda brandishes her smartphone like a weapon.

LUCINDA

I'm on it.

RILEY

I'll dig up some mourners with a social media blitz.

LUCINDA

Need free food to get a crowd.

RILEY

I dated a guy with a food truck.

LUCINDA

Who do we know in the clergy?

Riley pulls out a flask from her back pocket.

LUCINDA (CONT'D)

Tell me you're kidding!

Riley smiles devilishly.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Dozens of Mourners (various types and ages, including some obvious porn stars), are lined up to get into the funeral parlor.

Two Muscular Bouncers (30s; black suits, sunglasses) stand behind red ropes.

A Hotdog Truck ("Some Dogs Go To Hell") screeches around the corner and slams to a stop in front of the funeral home.

The line starts shifting slowly toward the food truck.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riley wears a bright Hawaiian dress.

Riley and Lucinda quickly modify flower arrangements by ripping off signs: "Happy Bar Mitzvah, Leonard," "Congrats William and Peter," "My Best Friend, Bruno," and "Here, Kitty-Kitty!"

LUCINDA

Where'd you find all his friends?

RILEY

Followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and porn sites.

LUCINDA  
How'd you get 'em here?

RILEY  
Food truck, cash bar, and I  
promised them stand-up comedy.

LUCINDA  
You what?

RILEY  
Where'd you get the flowers?

LUCINDA  
Dumpster behind a florist shop.  
Guess Leonard decided not to become  
a man, and William and Peter  
eloped.

RILEY  
Bruno and Kitty-Kitty?

LUCINDA  
Passed the pet cemetery on the...

They are interrupted by a young, handsome, homeless man  
(30s), JUWAN MUHAMMED, in raggedy and stinky clothes.

JUWAN  
Here for the bartender job.

Riley is stunned when Lucinda establishes eye contact with  
Juwani right away.

RILEY  
Lucinda? Took you an hour to look  
me in the eye, and you looked right  
into his! Sup?

Juwani lowers his head in shyness.

LUCINDA  
You got clean clothes in your  
shopping cart?

Juwani nods 'no.'

RILEY  
The funeral starts in ten minutes.  
Let's get you showered and changed.

Juwani smiles.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Not us in the shower. You!

Juwan shrugs happily.

LUCINDA  
What about clothes?

RILEY  
Take the suit off, Johnny Long.  
He's used to it.

Lucinda races to the Chapel, while Riley pulls Juwan to her apartment.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Mourners file in to see a closed casket, a large speaker plays a Dixieland Jazz playlist beginning with a somber tune, and a small bar is set up in the other corner.

Riley checks IDs and ages at the front and attaches a red wristband to those over 21.

Father O'Brien pushes ahead in line to get to Riley.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Shorry I'm late?

RILEY  
Pleading the fifth, or drinking it?

Riley reaches into the priest's coat and takes out a flask.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
I need you to tend bar until our  
regular bartender cleans up.

The priest's eyes light up.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
The Lord'sh work.

Riley rolls her eyes in disgust and gives the priest a pat-down and finds his second flask.

RILEY  
Oh, and I wrote a short, respectful  
obituary to read.

Riley hands a folded paper titled "Eulogy" to Father O'Brien

The priest opens it and follows along as Riley recites it from memory.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Johnny was a hard man to get to know. He was orphaned as a child and raised by nuns. Well-loved by everyone in the business, etcetera.

The priest nods and smiles.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Should be easy.

Riley pushes Father O'Brien toward the bar.

Lucinda guides mourners to seats. Several carry in foot-long hot dogs from the food truck.

Lucinda accepts a huge tip to seat two porn stars in the front row.

Riley turns away Two Gang Members (18) after checking their IDs. They shrug and begin to leave, then she laughs and turns them around and points to two seats in the back.

Father O'Brien works the bar, serving equal amounts to himself and the mourners.

The mourners stand around and chat, and drink.

Juwan enters from the Prep Room door wearing Johnny Long's suit, which is laughably long in the coat sleeves and pants. Still, Lucinda is smitten.

Juwan relieves Father O'Brien at the bar, and Lucinda guides the drunken priest to his chair in the corner, stealing glances at Juwan every chance she gets.

Everyone hears the loud, funny food-truck horn HONK, and they rush to their assigned seats.

Riley squeezes her way to the front of the Chapel.

The room becomes an awkward silence because Riley is shaking in fear.

RILEY

Thank you. Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the Cox Funeral Parlor. I'm your host, Riley O'Regan.

(like a standup comic)  
Anybody here from Philadelphia?

Riley puts her hand above her eyes to block out the crowd, but there is only silence.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Went to a mobster's funeral in Philly. They offered family discounts to anybody in the Corleone family.

Silence. Riley does a poor impersonation of Marlon Brando.

RILEY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna make him a coffin he can't reuse.

Silence. Riley looks to Lucinda, who looks away sadly.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Don't know about you, but I can't wait to be embalmed.

A heckler from the back speaks up.

HECKLER (O.S.)

You're bombing now!

Riley pauses and addresses her heckler.

RILEY

You're right. What is it about funerals? Why does somebody have to die to bring us together? Why should we be sad? They remind us to love each other while we're alive... which isn't very long.

(Points to Father O'Brien.)

Never be able to cremate Father O'Brien. So much alcohol in him, it would take three days to put out the fire.

The audience chuckles and smiles. Father O'Brien is oblivious.

RILEY (CONT'D)

My point is that nobody would be here for Mr. Johnny Long if we hadn't advertised on social media, offered drinks, and called in a food truck. And we all deserve better!

The crowd cheers and smiles more.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Heaven knows how many people Johnny serviced before he died.

Half the audience raises their hands, laughing.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Wasn't asking for a show of hands, or any other body parts for that matter, but you get the idea. Everyone's life deserves to be celebrated!

Louder cheers and raised glasses from the audience.

A sophisticated woman, Johnny's AGENT (50s) with an expensive pantsuit and dark glasses nods her head 'yes' in the back.

RILEY (CONT'D)

So let's give Johnny Long a proper send-off!

(beat)

I'd like to ask Father O'Brien to say a few kind words.

The crowd cheers and claps for Riley as Father O'Brien staggers to center stage.

Father O'Brien unfolds the eulogy and reads it with comical insobriety, pausing at just the wrong moments.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(coughs, clears his throat)

Mr. Johnny Long was a hard man.

The crowd laughs hysterically, while the priest looks at the coffin.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

To get to know.

The crowd laughs, but the priest is surprised.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Orphaned at a young age, he suffered from narcolepsy. Thank God he was raised by nuns.

The Heckler in the back speaks up.

HECKLER

How much did they raise him, Father?

The crowd howls as Father O'Brien continues to read.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Until he was at least twelve...

The crowd howls with laughter as Riley steps up to remove the eulogy from Father O'Brien's hands.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)  
Years-old.

Everyone laughs.

Riley doesn't see Father O'Brien stagger to the coffin and begin opening the lid.

RILEY  
So please stick around, and share  
stories and memories of Mister  
Johnny Long.

The priest fully opens the lid, sees that Johnny is naked, and faints.

The crowd stands to peek in the coffin and "wow," while Lucinda and Juwan help Father O'Brien back to his seat.

The jazz playlist picks up the pace, New Orleans style.

The crowd starts dancing, hooting, and hollering.

Johnny's Manager works her way through the crowd to hand Riley her business card and a thick envelope of cash, before sneaking out the front door.

Riley peeks in the envelope and closes it immediately.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Drink up, everyone, and if you'd  
like to contribute to the beautiful  
flower arrangement and the  
playlist, please see Lucinda.

Juwan returns to the bar where many customers are patiently waiting with ten- and twenty-dollar bills in their hands.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - LATER

Lucinda and Juwan count out thousands of dollars on an autopsy table, eyeing and smiling at each other.

Riley paces in an unhappy mood.

RILEY

Heckler was right. I bombed out there!

JUWAN

Stunk worse than me. But the priest warmed up the crowd.

LUCINDA

All that laughing and dancing afterwards!

JUWAN

Hell of a party. And talk about tips!

Juwan and Lucinda laugh.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - SAME

Meanwhile, Preston walks into the Chapel to see Johnny Long naked in the casket, plastic cups and beer bottles tossed on the floor, and tortilla chips scattered about.

He's fuming mad and paces, hearing the voices from the Prep Room.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - SAME

Lucinda puts an arm around Riley's shoulder.

LUCINDA

Don't be sad, girl. Look at the green we raked in.

JUWAN

Nothing to be sad about, boss. I got back from the Middle East and became a forgotten statistic.

RILEY

How bad was it for you?

JUWAN

Like many of my boys. I died and went to hell on earth. P-T-S-B.

LUCINDA

P-T-S-B?

JUWAN  
Said it was Bullshit, not a  
Disorder.

LUCINDA  
That's horrible.

JUWAN  
You two are the first to treat me  
nicely in three years.

Preston storms in the Prep Room door.

PRESTON  
What the hell happened out there?  
(turns to Juwan)  
And who are you?

JUWAN  
New bartender?

Preston looks at Juwan's suit and turns his eyes toward the  
Chapel before turning back with an angrier look.

PRESTON  
Funeral parlors don't have  
bartenders!

RILEY  
We just wanted to give Johnny Long  
a proper send-off.

PRESTON  
Proper send off. Like he's going on  
a steamboat cruise on the  
Mississippi?

LUCINDA  
(proudly)  
The New Orleans jazz playlist was  
my idea. Look at all the money we  
made!

Preston points a finger at Lucinda.

PRESTON  
Money can't buy respectability!

Riley steps between Preston and Lucinda.

RILEY  
All my fault, Mr. Cox. Won't happen  
again.

Preston paces as he calms down.

PRESTON

You bet it won't happen again! I want you to clean up that mess in the Chapel. I came back to tell you we have a rush job from our competitors down the street.

RILEY

That hack crematorium?

PRESTON

Ovens are backed up. My ex-girlfriend, Darlene, is throwing us a bone: Mrs. Eileen Lo.

RILEY

There are 206 bones in a human body, but I think Johnny Long had an extra one.

Preston angrily points a finger in Johnny's direction.

PRESTON

I want Mr. Long's suit dry cleaned and returned to him before his casket is driven to the cemetery this afternoon.

LUCINDA

But...

Preston points to Lucinda and Riley.

PRESTON

I need you two to respectfully cremate Mrs. Eileen Lo and return her ashes by nine PM tonight. Got it?

RILEY

Clean the shrine and make it shine. Dry-clean Long before he gets dropped six feet short. Shake and bake Mrs. Lo on high and deliver by nine. Got it.

Juwan is stunned. Lucinda chews gum.

Preston glares at Riley.

PRESTON

I'll expect your resignation on my Gramps's desk by ten when I return. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a big urology exam coming up.

RILEY

Urine luck!

Preston, not listening to Riley, storms out.

Juwan starts to strip.

JUWAN

Pants were too tight in the crotch, anyway.

Lucinda and Riley glance down.

JUWAN (CONT'D)

Just kidding.

Riley looks relieved. Lucinda looks disappointed.

LUCINDA

Really? He fired you?

RILEY

I screwed up. Tried to put the fun back in fun-erals.

Riley turns to Juwan, who is down to his undies.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Before you jump out of that long underwear, slip back on the suit and apply for a job down at the crematorium.

JUWAN

No resume!

RILEY

Use my resume. Change the name and the social.

LUCINDA

They call references!

RILEY

Put me down.

LUCINDA

Call Riley O'Regan, who worked all  
of two days?

RILEY

I'll say I'm a professor at the  
college.

JUWAN

No experience.

RILEY

You will after torching Lo on high.

LUCINDA

(sarcastic)

What could go wrong?

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - LATER

Riley, Lucinda, and Juwan are finishing the clean-up task  
with several bags of trash. Juwan is wearing Mr. Cox's suit  
(comically big on him).

RILEY

How did it do at Asses to Ashes,  
Juwan?

JUWAN

Ashes to Ashes? I'm worried they  
haven't called my references yet.

LUCINDA

You only had one!

RILEY

We have to get Mr. Cox's suit back  
to his closet before he misses it.  
Good thing he took a few days off  
to let his nose heal.

Riley's personal phone rings. Caller ID reads: Ashes to  
Ashes.

She puts up her hand to stop the cleaning.

Juwan and Lucinda gather around, but Riley pushes them away.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Professor Anita Deadringer, School  
of Mortuary Science.

(pause)

Dar-mean, is it?

(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)

(pause)

Darling. I see. How can I help you?  
Pretty busy with the pandemic.  
We're a dying business, I tell the  
kids.

(pause)

That's why you called? Juwan  
Muhammed? So bright that other  
students had to wear sunglasses.  
Handles every-body like it's his  
own.

(pause)

Work experience? Been helping with  
funerals and cremations all over  
town. Should finish his practicum  
hours with a wake 'n bake over at  
Cox today.

(pause)

Fully graduated. I'd hire him right  
away.

(pause)

Uh. Huh. You're welcome.

JUWAN

That sounded good.

RILEY

Gonna check your address at the  
boarding house next.

JUWAN

I don't have a...

Lucinda's phone rings. Caller ID reads, "Ashes to Ashes."

Lucinda answers in a stuffy voice, reading from notes.

RILEY

(whispers)

Follow the script.

LUCINDA

Budget Boarding House. Rooms to  
lease, and cheap food. Manager  
speaking.

(pause)

Yes, I can verify his address.

(pause)

'Bout six months. Quiet type.

(smiles at Juwan)

Cute tush too. Don't tell him I  
said so.

Riley yanks the note from Lucinda's hand.

LUCINDA (CONT'D)  
 You're welcome. Bye now.

Lucinda ends the call. Juwan hugs her, and then Riley.

Lucinda gets another call from Ashes to Ashes.

LUCINDA (CONT'D)  
 Budget Boarding House. Rooms to  
 lease, and cheap food. Manager  
 speaking.  
 (pause)  
 Yes, He happens to be right here.  
 (hands her phone to Juwan)

JUWAN  
 Hello?  
 (pause, excited)  
 I got the job!  
 (pause)  
 No personal phone yet, but I'll get  
 one with my first paycheck. Thank  
 you so much. See you tonight.

Juwan hangs up, while Riley gives Lucinda a fist bump.

RILEY  
 Let's go. You need some training!

JUWAN  
 What happens when they ask for  
 school transcripts?

RILEY  
 Tell them they're in the mail.  
 Everybody blames the poor post  
 office.

Lucinda grabs Juwan by the hand to exit to the Prep Room.

LUCINDA  
 Come with us. You need to learn to  
 burn.

Riley stops smiling and mumbles.

RILEY  
 After tonight, everybody will have  
 a job but me.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR OFFICE - NIGHT

The clock reads "11," and Riley, still in her Hawaiian dress, has her letter of resignation in her hand and her backpack packed.

Preston trudges into the office sadly, surprised to see Riley, as he sits behind his father's chair.

PRESTON  
What are you doing here?

RILEY  
You wanted to see me.

Riley hands Preston her letter, but he sets it aside.

PRESTON  
My dad... my dad has cancer.

Riley turns sad.

RILEY  
Oh my God.

PRESTON  
Well, not cancer so much as a precancerous mole on his nose.

RILEY  
Precancerous?

Preston stands, defending his father.

PRESTON  
Basal cell carcinoma. Still had to be surgically removed while I was in the office with him. So much blood. I almost died.

Riley looks away, holding back the laughter.

RILEY  
Dark moles are the worst, but it doesn't sound so...

PRESTON  
(interrupting)  
He needed a Band-Aid! And he can't greet the grieving family with a huge bandage on his nose.

RILEY  
Of course not.

PRESTON  
(cringes)  
And the blood! I couldn't look.

RILEY  
But a doctor will see...

Preston interrupts and stands to leave.

PRESTON  
You'll have to stay on for a while.  
I've got a big proctology exam  
tomorrow.

RILEY  
Little behind in your work?

Preston turns his head like he doesn't understand or isn't listening.

PRESTON  
Right. I've got to study my ass  
off.

RILEY  
You'd be short one example.

PRESTON  
Take over the office for me and  
Gramps. I'll increase your salary,  
of course.

Preston looks away nervously. Riley raises one finger as if she's conducting a proctology exam.

RILEY  
Got it, sir. We're number one here  
at Cox.

Preston thinks Riley is sincere as he continues to exit.

PRESTON  
Right you are. And the Bishop wants  
us to call him back. I didn't have  
time.

RILEY  
Got him, sir.

PRESTON

And the voicemails on the phone.  
Four people asked for you  
specifically to do their relatives'  
cremations, but they also want a  
funeral service first.

Preston tosses four business cards on his desk.

Riley giggles as she answers, but Preston isn't listening.

RILEY

Got it! Four Wake and Bake  
specials. I'll need to hire Juwan  
back, and we'll need overtime for  
Lucinda, Juwan, and me.

Preston is out the door.

PRESTON (O.S.)

Yes, Yes... Whatever you need.  
Can't believe business is  
improving.

Riley sits in the desk seat, rips up her letter, then stares  
at a blinking light on the phone.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - MORNING

Riley, in a cute blue dress, holds a staff meeting over a  
dead, short, thin Black Man (early 20s) on a metal table  
covered by a sheet,

Juwan enters wearing the man's tiny gray suit.

RILEY

Thanks for helping us out, Juwan.

Juwan is noticeably uncomfortable in the tiny man's suit.

LUCINDA

That boy won't miss it. Closed  
casket.

JUWAN

Heard that before.

RILEY

(to Lucinda)  
Did you know Preston can't stand  
the sight of blood?

LUCINDA

Can't do body prep either. Hates  
blood, all body fluids, and death!

JUWAN

(to himself)

Working nights there and days here.  
Think somebody my size would die?  
No!

RILEY

Preston's oh-for-two picking  
professions. Meanwhile, Juwan went  
from homeless to having two jobs.

JUWAN

Nobody told me work was so tiring.

RILEY

Burning the altar candles at both  
ends, huh?

JUWAN

Sleeping when I can at Lucinda's.

LUCINDA

(snicker devilishly)

Which ain't very often.

RILEY

Busy day. This is our ten A.M.

LUCINDA

Gangbanger?

RILEY

And valedictorian. Chess club.  
Circus enthusiast. Clown college  
until his accident.

JUWAN

Car accident?

RILEY

Circus accident.

LUCINDA

Attacked by a lion?

JUWAN

Crushed by an elephant?

RILEY

Smothered by accident by a jealous bearded lady. May show up at the funeral.

JUWAN

How will we know her?

Silent stares.

RILEY

The main thing is, keep the oven hot. We got four in a row. Saving production costs with the same food truck, cheap playlists, and boxed wine.

LUCINDA

Did you call Father O'Brien?

RILEY

Not for the first three services. He drank three times what we paid him. Juwan and I will split it. I'll take one and three. He'll take two. The last service today is for two teachers.

JUWAN

Not religious. Never was.

RILEY

Fake it 'til you make it. Unless Lucinda wants to volunteer.

LUCINDA

Fear of live people.

RILEY

Glossophobia. Like me. But I'm getting better with small crowds.

JUWAN

Glossophobia? I thought that was fear of public drinking.

RILEY

That's glassophobia.

LUCINDA

No. I used to fear live people, but not since I met Juwan. Anyway, the second service is for an atheist professor.

JUWAN  
How'd he die?

RILEY  
Struck by lightning.

JUWAN  
Tweed sports coat? Can't do it!

LUCINDA  
Wife doesn't even want his ashes.

JUWAN  
What do we do with 'em?

RILEY & LUCINDA  
Burial at sea.

Juwan looks puzzled, then frightened.

JUWAN  
You don't mean...

RILEY  
It may take two or three flushes.

LUCINDA  
Next up is an old witch. President  
of the Coven Union 666.

RILEY  
What do we sing? Hell to the Chief?

JUWAN  
I don't look my best in pointy  
black hats. I'm not going.

RILEY  
Yes, you are. I'll do the service,  
you tend bar, then pour water on  
her later, and she'll melt in your  
arms.

LUCINDA  
Who's our fourth customer today?

RILEY  
The two teachers!

LUCINDA  
Same school?

RILEY

No. One was a public high school,  
and one was Father O'Brien's  
Catholic school.

JUWAN

How'd they die?

RILEY

Same field trip location. The tar  
pits. He fell in, and she tried to  
save him.

Juwan's eyes open widely.

JUWAN

How awful.

Two of Lucinda's fingers are stuck together.

LUCINDA

Sticky too.

RILEY

We don't expect violence, but the  
public versus private school debate  
may come up.

LUCINDA

Juwan, keep Father O'Brien away  
from the bar.

Riley glances at Juwan.

RILEY

She's serious. He hates public  
schools. Always going on about  
class sizes, test scores, and  
putting Jesus back in the schools.

JUWAN

Jesus? Did he drop out, too?

LUCINDA

Oh Lordy.

RILEY

What could go wrong?

They all shrug.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - LATER

Riley greets Twenty Mourners who are either black or Mexican gang members or white circus folks, giving each other deadly glares.

The gang members carry in pink cotton candy or popcorn, while the circus folks carry in tacos.

The playlist alternates between rap music and circus organ music.

Lucinda seats them on opposite sides of the Chapel.

Juwan is behind the bar, but he can barely move in the small gray suit. He looks at the women on the circus side of the Chapel and is terrified when he spots a large woman with a thick black beard.

Several gang members have their hands in their jackets like they are carrying pistols.

A clown on the circus side glares at the gangbangers and reaches into his coat sleeve ready to pull out a bouquet (we see the stems).

The last mourner to arrive is a tall, sexy blonde with a thick black beard. Everyone turns to glare at her.

Gangbangers pull pistols but don't know who to shoot.

Riley races quickly to the front of the Chapel to begin the ceremony. The mood is tense as the two bearded women glare at each other, and the gang members point weapons back and forth at the two bearded women.

The large bearded lady tears after the thin bearded lady, and a wrestling match breaks out.

The crowd leaves their seats to enjoy the wrestling match.

The gangbangers put away their weapons and everyone begins cheering until Lucinda breaks up the fight.

Everyone moans that the fight is over, and they retake their seats.

RILEY

We are reminded in death, how much  
we have in common in life.

The mourners look puzzled as they stare at each other.

Riley waves Juwan out from behind the bar, and the mourners gasp in horror.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Juwan, for example, ran away to join the circus as the world's shortest giant and the world's tallest midget.

The mourners all wipe tears from their eyes.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Rejected by his homies and the circus, he had nowhere to turn.

Juwan speaks sadly and slowly.

JUWAN

I like cremating people.

Both sides of the mourners nod in agreement.

RILEY

And guess what? Everyone's ashes are the same color. So...

(beat)

Why can't we all just get along?

Everyone hugs each other and bellies up to the bar.

The playlist blares "Good-bye Cruel World (I'm off to join the circus)."

The party continues.

LATER

In a cleaned-up Chapel, a dozen "university types," Professors, students, and the Widow (late-20s), a hot graduate student, file into the Chapel. They all carry in BRAND hot coffee containers.

The playlist broadcasts soft coffee-house music.

The cheap, plywood casket is closed.

Juwan is alone as a bartender, wearing the professor's tweed jacket with elbow patches and a burn hole at his heart. He also sports the professor's khaki pants and hiking boots.

Everyone in the mortuary is bored, so Riley motions for Juwan to begin the ceremony.

Juwan reads from a yellow sticky note.

JUWAN

We are gathered here to remember Professor Daniel Blankly, who was cut down too early in life by a bolt of lightning.

His Widow weeps uncontrollably, paralyzing Juwan.

Riley goes to comfort the widow, whispering to her.

RILEY

He's gone to a better place.

WIDOW

He didn't believe in Heaven or Hell.

RILEY

The pine box, then?

WIDOW

He didn't get my final grades in!  
What will I do?

The widow and Riley see a much older professor eyeing her from across the room. He's licking his chops.

Riley pats her on the back as Juwan reads his notes.

RILEY

Hold out for better offers.

JUWAN

I understand Professor Blankly was just minutes away from finding the murder hornets that invaded our forests: the Lost Nest Monsters, as he called them. And he was weeks away from finding Bigfoot when that freak lightning storm hit.

The crowd lowers its heads in sadness.

Juwan has nothing else on his notes, so he ad-libs.

JUWAN (CONT'D)

Does anyone have any questions?

A college STUDENT (male, 20) raises his hand.

Riley hits her palm to her forehead in disbelief.

Juwan looks around before calling on the student.

JUWAN (CONT'D)

Yes, young man.

The student stands.

STUDENT

Is it possible that Professor  
Blankley was struck by lightning by  
God for not believing in Him?

Juwan pauses and looks up.

JUWAN

That's an untestable hypothesis.

STUDENT

How so?

Juwan turns angry.

JUWAN

Substitute Bigfoot for God in your  
premise. Is it possible to conduct  
a scientific study that could  
support or reject your claim?

The student sits down, almost drawn to tears.

Juwan paces angrily.

JUWAN (CONT'D)

What are you being taught in  
college these days? In my day...

Riley races over and pulls Juwan back to the bar, as Lucinda  
smiles at Juwan.

RILEY

Drinks are on the house!

The Mourners claw their way to the bar, blurting out science  
questions for Juwan, and the wake goes into high gear.

The playlist kicks in with Sam Cooke's "Wonderful World."

The elder professor moves in to hit on the Widow, as Lucinda  
moves in on Juwan.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - LATER

Riley watches Lucinda apply black lipstick and cartoonish makeup to a Witch (70s), dressed in a black dress and gloves, and wearing ornate, evil-looking jewelry. Her face is frowning.

Juwan, still dressed in the Professor's clothes, rests his head on a rolled-up black shawl and fades in and out of sleep.

RILEY

Where do you suppose Juwan learned to talk like that?

Lucinda stops applying makeup.

LUCINDA

Wasn't he magnificent?

RILEY

Better Google him.

LUCINDA

You mean like those sites that get you police records, financial history, and naked photos?

Riley tilts her head and stares at Lucinda.

RILEY

What?

LUCINDA

They photoshop anybody's head on somebody else's naked body.

RILEY

That's not a thing.

JUWAN

That's a thing.

Riley and Lucinda glance over at Juwan, who instantly falls asleep again.

RILEY

I mean education history, work history, and service records.

Lucinda and Riley pull out their Brand smartphones and begin searching.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Too many Juwan Muhammads.

LUCINDA  
Filter by state, city, and age.

RILEY  
Already there.

LUCINDA  
Purple Heart. One tour. Honorary  
discharge.

RILEY  
All after he quit his teaching job.

LUCINDA  
That's why he could talk that shit.

RILEY  
No address found.

LUCINDA  
No next of kin.

RILEY  
Immigrant?

LUCINDA  
We all are if you ain't Native  
American.

RILEY  
He was a medic! That's why he's so  
good at this! His teaching job was  
at the medical school that Preston  
goes to!

Lucinda returns to makeup, adding huge rosy cheeks, before  
turning angry towards Juwan.

LUCINDA  
Didn't tell us shit?

RILEY  
Doesn't trust us yet.

There's a loud KNOCK on the back door.

MR. COX (O.S.)  
It's Mr. Cox. Are you decent?

RILEY

Not decent, but boys tell me I'm  
lots of fun. Be there in a second.

Riley whispers to Lucinda.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Hide Juwan beside the witch.

Lucinda wakes a tired Juwan and guides him to lie on the  
table, as Riley goes to unlock the door.

Juwan quickly goes back to sleep as Lucinda covers all but  
his face with the sheet.

Riley opens the back door, and Mr. Cox storms in. His nose is  
heavily bandaged, with a spot of blood showing.

MR. COX

What's going on in here?

RILEY

Busy day, Sir. Four services and  
cremations. Could use a conveyor  
belt. Like a disassembly line.

MR. COX

Business is picking up!

LUCINDA

And burning up!

Mr. Cox stares at the Witch's frowning face and Juwan's half-  
smiling face.

MR. COX

Who do we have here?

Mr. Cox leans in.

RILEY

Conjoined twins.  
(point to the Witch)  
She was the pretty one.

Mr. Cox steps back.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Didn't think it was right to charge  
them double.

LUCINDA

But it's taking twice the makeup.

Riley stares at Mr. Cox's nose.

RILEY  
Better take care of that nose.

MR. COX  
Came to get the security camera  
footage for the past two days.

Riley and Lucinda stare at each other, panicked.

RILEY  
Security cameras?

Riley begins to lead Mr. Cox to the back door.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
But, Sir, digital security cameras  
are easily hacked by anybody with a  
smartphone and Wi-Fi. Is your Wi-Fi  
system password protected?

MR. COX  
Er. Well, no.

RILEY  
Hackers could be showing videos of  
live autopsies. I mean, dead  
autopsies in hundreds of countries.  
Go back and lie down. I'll take  
care of everything.

MR. COX  
And where's my grandson? I need him  
to change my bandages. Got a bed  
sore that...

RILEY  
Preston is pressing his fingers in  
someone's yahoo right now.

Lucinda pats Mr. Cox on the back and tries to hurry him out  
the door.

LUCINDA  
Final exam for Proctology.

RILEY  
Or a pre-test for prison. He'll do  
fine.

Mr. Cox turns angry as he leaves.

MR. COX  
Bring me the security videos for  
the past two days, immediately!

He turns to point at the witch and then to Juwan.

MR. COX (CONT'D)  
I'd add a lot more makeup to the  
second one!

RILEY  
Yes, sir, Mr. Cox. You're the boss.

Riley and Lucinda push Mr. Cox out the door and slam it shut.

Juwan wakes up, stares at the witch, and screams.

JUWAN  
That voice? Was that her husband?

RILEY  
That was our boss! Now let's get  
this witch in her box so we can  
hold the service.

LUCINDA  
What are you gonna say?

RILEY  
Who knows? Lucinda, grab a dozen  
candles. Riley, serve them all the  
witches' brew they can drink. The  
coven gave us three grand for the  
ceremony.

LUCINDA  
Damn, girl. You better be good!

JUWAN  
When Mr. Cox sees those security  
tapes, we'll all be dead!

Riley stands defiant!

RILEY  
They paid for a fun-eral, and  
they're going to get one!

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - LATER

Riley greets a dozen Mourners (20s-60s). Six of the Mourners wear all black robes with dark eye shadow above and below their eyes. Six Mourners are family members dressed in regular attire.

Riley hands each a small bag of candy corn.

The Mourners look puzzled by the candy corn, but accept it graciously.

RILEY

It's what she requested. Everything is.

Lucinda works a small hat-check station for tall-pointy witch's hats (women) and felt top hats (men).

The Mourners enter to see black curtains all around and a dozen lit candles.

"Black Magic Woman" by Santana plays in the background.

The security camera in the upper corner has a black towel over it.

Riley serves beer and wine with cubes of "dry ice" in them.

The mourners gather around the closed coffin with their drinks and candy corn.

Riley joins them.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Her instructions were quite clear.

Riley takes out her smartphone and reads from notes, as the Mourner's look at each other and nod 'yes.'

RILEY (CONT'D)

One. Candy corn and witch's brew shall be afforded each guest.

The Mourner's toast to each other.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Two. I'm gone, but I wanted to leave you with one last moronic gesture.

(like a game show host)

Welcome to "The Guessing Game."  
Each correct answer receives \$100 from my attorney.

Lucinda opens both casket doors.

The Mourner's cheer at first, then turn silent seeing the Witch's sad face (a stiffened frown).

The witch's Attorney (female 40s-50s), a Bette Midler-type, rips off her robe and pulls out a wad of \$100-bills.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Lucinda, expose the tattoo!

Lucinda rolls up the witch's robe to reveal an unrecognizable blob of ink on the witch's inner thigh.

The mourner's gasp, horrified.

RILEY (CONT'D)

That's right! Many young people get tattoos while they're tight-skinned youngsters. But with aging, swelling, shrinkage, and decay, it's become a popular game in old-folks' homes all around the world, guessing what the original tattoo looked like. For one hundred dollars, what is it?

The mourners are perplexed.

MOURNER #1

Do we get clues?

RILEY

Like animal, mineral, or vegetable?

MOURNER #2

She was a vegetable for some time before she died.

RILEY

We're just talking about the tattoo. It's an animal.

MOURNER #1

Norway rat?

RILEY

I'm sorry, no!

MOURNER #3

Half a head of red cabbage?

RILEY

I'm sorry, no! Animal, remember?

MOURNER #2  
This is disgusting.

RILEY  
She would have wanted it this way.

Lucinda checks her watch.

LUCINDA  
Time's up!

RILEY  
The animal we were looking for was  
Tyrannosaurus Rex.

The Attorney slaps a \$100-bill into Riley's hand, and everyone cheers and laughs.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
We'll donate this to our favorite  
charity, Coffin-It-Up, which helps  
poor and sickly chain-smokers in  
their last hour of need.  
(beat)  
Lucinda, will you please turn her  
over!

MOURNER #3  
Please, God, no!

RILEY  
Skirt stays down for this one.

Lucinda turns the witch face down.

MOURNER #1  
Thank God.

RILEY  
She wanted to be face down for her  
last confession.

MOURNER #2  
Confession is Catholic!

RILEY  
Her instructions. She wants someone  
to guess her innermost secret.

MOURNER #1  
That she's Catholic?

RILEY  
No.

MOURNER #3

She has more tattoos to guess?

RILEY

No.

MOURNER #2

She wasn't a witch at all.

The mourners gasp and stare at Mourner #2.

MOURNER #2 (CONT'D)

She just liked hanging out with unusual people like us.

The Attorney slaps a \$100-bill into Mourner #2's hand.

RILEY

That's right. Lucinda, please turn her back over.

Lucinda reaches her hands under the witch's face for a quick moment (adjusting her smile) before turning her face up.

RILEY (CONT'D)

You are the folks who made her happy.

They all laugh as they see the smile on the witch's face.

The Attorney slaps \$100-bills into all their hands repeatedly until his stash is gone.

The song "Monster Mash" plays, and everyone dances, drinks, and laughs.

Juwan sneaks back to the Prep Room and enters with a wooden stake, which he then holds with Riley and Lucinda.

Riley, Lucinda, and Juwan ceremoniously lay the stake in the coffin.

RILEY (CONT'D)

For the cremation, of course.

There is laughter, cheering, and a few tears of joy as the mourners congratulate Riley, Juwan, and Lucinda.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - LATER

Riley gives a pep talk to her team.

RILEY

When we go out there today, don't bring up hot-button issues on public versus private schools.

LUCINDA

What about Father O'Brien?

RILEY

Told him if he brings up the education debate, I'll throw the book at him.

Riley picks up a small, light Holy Bible and sets it down. She picks up a thick, heavy dictionary and takes it with her as she starts to exit.

LUCINDA

You could kill 'em with that thing!

RILEY

Job security. I told Father O'Brien, for today at least, there is no difference between public and private schools and their teachers!

Juwan rolls his eyes in disgust.

JUWAN

Right! No differences!

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - LATER

Riley greets 18 Mourners: Three adult couples (30s) are well dressed, wealthy, Private School Parents with one child each (15-17) in school uniforms and carrying tablet computers.

Three adult couples (30s), the non-Catholics, including one gay couple, are casually dressed with one poorly dressed kid each (15-17) with a tattered textbook and a pencil.

In the Chapel are two coffins. One is cheap and wooden with no flowers beside it, and one is fancy and surrounded by flowers.

Father O'Brien greets all the Catholic mourners on "their side" of the funeral parlor, then hurries to the bar. He drinks from a flask often.

"Another Brick in the Wall" plays on the playlist.

Several of the non-Catholic mourners and kids are lined up to get a drink from Juwan at the bar, along with one Catholic boy, who looks devilish.

The priest rubs the Catholic kids' heads a bit too long and makes them nervous and upset.

Lucinda tries to usher the non-Catholic kids to their seats.

The Catholic kids are busy working on their tablet computers, while the non-Catholics glare at them.

One non-Catholic boy tries unsuccessfully to get the attention of a Catholic girl.

Riley works her way up to the two caskets to step in front of Father O'Brien before the drunken priest has a chance to preach. [They interrupt and step in front of each other throughout the scene.]

FATHER O'BRIEN

We are gathered here...

RILEY

(interrupting)

Not to proselytize on the virtues of private versus public education, but to honor the lives of two equal and deserving teachers...

FATHER O'BRIEN

Not equal class sizes, I can assure you...

Lucinda serves the Catholic school kids a fancy school lunch of salmon, fresh veggies, garlic potatoes, and bottles of sparkling water.

RILEY

Whose lives were tragically cut short...

FATHER O'BRIEN

Not as short as those test scores from public schools...

RILEY

(turns on the priest)

Those teachers have to buy their own crayons.

Juwan serves the public-school kids a bowl of mac 'n cheese with a dead fly or two in the bowl.

FATHER O'BRIEN

They're too old for crayons anyway.  
 (turns to the public-  
 school kids)  
 Those heathen rats still use  
 crayons?

Riley is fuming mad and threatens Father O'Brien with her heavy dictionary.

RILEY

They call this part of the service  
 a Eulogy, not a Me-logy!

Riley swings the dictionary in the priest's direction.

The priest falls drunk before Riley connects.

The dictionary flies out of her hands and plows into a beautiful flower arrangement, busting it apart.

A fight breaks out with the school kids first, then the parents, as Juwan and Lucinda try to break it up.

Riley turns to see that the security camera in the corner is catching all of it. She shrugs as we hear punches landing and cries of pain from the crowd.

Sam Cooke's song, "Don't Know Much About History," plays in the background along with voices from the crowd.

CHILD #1 (V.O.)

Ow! He stabbed me in the butt with  
 a pencil.

PARENT #1 (V.O.)

Oh Lord! Is that my wallet?!

CHILD #2 (V.O.)

Gimme that tablet computer, kid, or  
 your eye is next!

We hear a beer bottle shatter.

PARENT #2 (V.O.)

Can I get another beer here?

CHILD #3

I think your priest is dead!

LATER

"To Sir, With Love" plays on the playlist.

The Chapel is a mess, but we see all the mourners arm-in-arm, paired as Catholic and non-Catholic, patting both caskets.

They have to step over Father O'Brien as they exit, smiling and toasting the two teachers.

One of the non-Catholic boys has his arm wrapped around a Catholic girl. He has a devilish grin.

Riley, Lucinda, and Juwan begin picking up the mess, ignoring Father O'Brien.

Preston enters from the Prep Room with a bandaged head and a frown on his face. His right hand is behind his back.

Preston steps over Father O'Brien and does a double-take look at Juwan before speaking to Riley and Lucinda.

PRESTON

I'm... I'm...

RILEY

(interrupting)  
Having a bad day?

LUCINDA

Fainted at the sight of blood  
again?

Preston reveals his right hand to show a heavily bandaged index finger.

RILEY

During your proctology exam?

PRESTON

Afraid so.

RILEY

Poor fella!

PRESTON

They let me go from the medical  
school.

Riley wiggles her index finger up in the air.

RILEY

I was talking about your patient.

Preston points to Juwan.

PRESTON

Who's that?

RILEY

Bartender, you said I could hire.  
How badly did you bump your head?

PRESTON

So hard they talked about requiring  
med student helmets for insurance  
reasons.

Preston looks down at Father O'Brien.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

Did Father O'Brien fall again? He  
could have saved a life here.

Riley takes Preston by the arm and leads him to the prep room  
door.

RILEY

Oh, he's not dead, but he slept  
through round two of the fight.

PRESTON

Round two?

(looks back)

Oh. I showed Gramps how to access  
the security footage from the past  
two days. He's looking at it now.  
And, he just got notice that he  
owes two thousand dollars in back  
taxes. Might have to close up shop.

RILEY

Don't worry about that. Leave it to  
me.

Preston exits.

LUCINDA

Fun while it blasted.

RILEY

Juwan, do you have time to get  
these two in the oven before your  
night shift?

JUWAN

If I could wear the male teacher's  
clothes! Finally, someone my size.

LUCINDA

What do we do about Father O'Brien?

RILEY

Carry him to the Prep Room. If we wake him up, he'll run straight to Mr. Cox. If we let him sleep, we might have time to clean up this mess before we're fired.

LATER

The Chapel is empty and still filthy.

Riley picks up a few of the many beer bottles by the bar when a nicely dressed, male PERSONAL ASSISTANT (20s) walks in with red eyes and a bundle of \$100 bills.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

My boss, Mr. Buckingham, heard about your rather impromptu funerals.

Riley looks around at the mess.

RILEY

Fun isn't the word I'd choose. We haven't had time to tidy up...

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

(interrupts)

He doesn't care about trivial matters. He has instructed me to reward you handsomely if you could see fit to hold a short service and cremation for his most cherished loved one.

RILEY

Now?

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Right now! He's far too busy with international affairs to attend personally, so I have to live-stream the service to him in Vienna.

Riley stares at the bundle of bills.

RILEY

Okay. Bring the body around to the back, give us ten minutes, and leave all the arrangements to me?

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Agreed.

(hands over the bills)

This is just the down payment, of course. If my boss is pleased with the service, he'll triple your fee.

RILEY

The deceased's name.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Bernard.

RILEY

Bernard what?

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Just Bernard.

The Personal Assistant exits through the front door, as Riley races to the Prep Room.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR PREP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riley enters the Prep Room to see Juwan dressed in the male teacher's nice suit, and Lucinda preparing to load the naked teacher in the nice casket into the cremation furnace.

The female teacher remains in the cheap wooden casket off to the side.

Father O'Brien rests comfortably on a steel table.

RILEY

Quick, we have a new customer coming in the back. Cover Father O'Brien before you toast the teacher.

There is a soft knock on the back door.

LUCINDA

I'll get it.

Riley pushes past Lucinda to get the door.

RILEY

No, no. I got it, but I may need your help carrying the body.

JUWAN

The body?

Riley opens the door and peeks out.

Riley's eyes and Lucinda's eyes open widely, too stunned to speak.

LUCINDA

We can't...

RILEY

(interrupts)

Do enough for Bernard. Lucinda,  
please prepare our nicest casket,  
and ask Juwan to escort our priest  
to the Chapel.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - LATER

Father O'Brien rests comfortably on the floor of the Chapel when Riley enters from the Prep Room.

Following Riley, Lucinda, and Juwan roll in the teacher's "closed" casket in front of a few re-used flower arrangements.

RILEY

You two stand in reverence no  
matter what goes on here. Got it?!

LUCINDA

Isn't it against the law to hold a  
funeral for a dog?

JUWAN

Much less cremate one?

Lucinda stares at the casket.

LUCINDA

With a teacher?

RILEY

We have no choice. Mr. Cox needs  
the money!

(beat)

And don't say anything to Father  
O'Brien when I wake him up. I'll do  
all the talking. Got it?!

LUCINDA

Got it.

JUWAN

I'll get him a stiff drink.

Juwan goes to the bar and grabs a bottle of Irish Whiskey and a shot glass, while Riley wakes up the priest.

RILEY  
Father, wake up!

The groggy priest begins to stir.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
What? What happened? End of the world?

RILEY  
For some. Not for others. You passed out in the middle of the good teacher's eulogy.

Father O'Brien looks around to see the casket and Lucinda. He smiles when Juwan brings him a drink.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
I'd better get back to the parish.

RILEY  
Can't let you go until you complete the eulogy.

Father O'Brien takes another drink.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
How? Everyone's gone!

RILEY  
We're going to tape it for your parishioners.

Father O'Brien takes another drink.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Suppose it couldn't hurt. What's the poor man's name again?

RILEY  
Bernard. Everyone says he was a real saint.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Yes, that must be it. I may need your help.

RILEY  
We're here for you, Father.

The Personal Assistant enters with his smartphone on a tripod and sets it up without a word.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Cue the playlist, Lucinda.

In the background, Baha Men sing "Who Let The Dogs Out."

Father O'Brien takes another drink and looks around, perplexed, but he begins his eulogy.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Bernard was a saint to everyone who  
knew him.

The PERSONAL ASSISTANT gives the priest a thumbs up, and the priest returns it.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)  
He always lifted a hand.

RILEY  
(interrupts)  
Or a leg.

The priest glances at Riley, perplexed.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
To help others.

Juwan pours the priest another shot.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)  
He'll leave a big hole to fill.

RILEY  
Especially in the backyard.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Everyone said he worked like a...

RILEY  
Dog!

The priest glances at Riley, perplexed.

The Personal Assistant motions to Lucinda to open the coffin.

Riley nods a 'yes' while she and Juwan position themselves between the priest and the coffin.

The priest looks up to the heavens as Lucinda opens the coffin lid.

Lucinda, Riley, and Juwan turn to see the large dead dog (just sleeping) atop the naked teacher. [The Personal Assistant's smartphone camera can only see the Saint Bernard.]

FATHER O'BRIEN  
We therefore commit...

RILEY  
Saint.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Bernard's body to his final resting  
place; earth to earth, ashes to  
ashes...

The priest turns to face the casket, so Lucinda pushes the lid shut.

Riley pulls the priest in for a hug, clinging to him to prevent him from seeing the dog and teacher in the coffin.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)  
Dust to dust.

RILEY  
That was beautiful, Father O'Brien.

Lucinda and Juwan quickly roll the coffin back to the Prep Room.

Riley lets go of the priest, who remains baffled and tipsy.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Thank you all for coming. Remember,  
Cox Funeral Parlor. It's the place  
to go when you stop!

Riley waves.

Father O'Brien sees Riley wave, so he waves.

Riley slips the priest a \$100 bill as the Personal Assistant hands Riley an envelope with a polite bow.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT  
Loved everything about this. He  
wants to meet you when he returns  
from Vienna.

RILEY  
(interrupts)  
Sausages are just outside in the  
food truck. Try the bratwurst too.

Riley pushes the Personal Assistant and the priest toward the door.

RILEY (CONT'D)

You can pick up the ashes tomorrow morning. All dogs go to heaven, we always say! Bye-bye now.

Mr. Cox and Preston storm into the Chapel from the Prep Room with Juwan and Lucinda in tow.

Mr. Cox sees the mess from the day's funerals and glares at Riley.

MR. COX

You're fired.

RILEY

Fired up about the endless possibilities and new revenue streams...

Preston lowers his eyes.

PRESTON

Just fired. We watched the security tapes.

MR. COX

The fighting.

PRESTON

The drinking.

MR. COX

Naked bodies.

Riley is proud.

RILEY

Doesn't get much better.

MR. COX

It will be, with you three gone!

Riley looks sadly at Lucinda and Juwan.

RILEY

They had nothing to do with it. I'm to blame.

Lucinda and Juwan start bragging about their contributions.

LUCINDA

Uh uh. Fishnet stockings on the  
Bishop's wife. My idea.

JUWAN

Mocktails at the bar for kids. My  
idea.

Lucinda and Juwan turn on each other.

LUCINDA

Flowers from the pet cemetery.  
Mine!

JUWAN

Smokin' witch's brew. Mine.

Riley steps between Lucinda and Juwan.

RILEY

Yes, but adding the "fun" in fun-  
erals? All my ideas. Maybe we went  
a little...

MR. COX

(interrupts)  
Insane?

Lucinda and Juwan pat Riley on the back in agreement, as she  
reaches for an envelope full of money under the bar.

RILEY

The new revenue streams: the food  
truck, the bar, and the  
personalized services. My ideas.

PRESTON

We still have to fire you.

Riley opens the envelope and hands Mr. Cox all the cash.

Mr. Cox's eyes and Preston's eyes open widely.

MR. COX

The back taxes!

PRESTON

And more...

RILEY

Tip of the iceberg. Folks are dying  
to get buried or burned by us. Look  
at what I've lined up for tomorrow.

Riley produces four business cards and hands them to Preston.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Rapper from the south side wants his "hoes" to dance on his coffin at nine.

MR. COX

His what...

RILEY

Got the chain-smoking fireworks salesman at eleven.

LUCINDA

The vegan who had poisonous mushrooms at two...

RILEY

(interrupting)

And I told my friend, Mac, he could rent the Chapel after hours for a Comedy Night at the Crypt.

PRESTON

Comedy night...

RILEY

Shit! That was tonight! We'd supply the dead bodies. The comedians would bring in the live ones. It could bring in thousands of dollars.

Preston sounds worried, while Mr. Cox sounds angry.

MR. COX

Five generations, Ms. O'Regan!

PRESTON

Your friend, Mac?

MR. COX

Respectable business. Does that mean anything to you?

RILEY

Ex-boyfriend.

PRESTON

Oh.

MR. COX

You're fired, Ms. O'Regan! Preston,  
our resident med-school dropout,  
will take over daily operations.

Preston isn't listening to Gramps as he stares into Riley's eyes.

PRESTON

He was coming to see you tonight.

MR. COX

I'm locking all the doors for  
twenty-four hours until we can get  
this place cleaned up and turned  
around!

Mr. Cox stares at Juwan, perplexed.

JUWAN

I'm your part-time bartender.

Mr. Cox is furious with everyone and begins to stomp away, as Preston looks sadly at Riley.

MR. COX

We don't have bartenders at funeral parlors. I want you all out of here! You too, Preston! I'm locking the doors in thirty minutes.

Mr. Cox exits as Preston's whimpers.

PRESTON

I should have become a bartender.

Riley perks up.

RILEY

We could use a new bartender at the comedy show tonight.

Lucinda and Juwan gather around Preston.

LUCINDA

The show is still on?

JUWAN

How?

RILEY

You heard Mr. Cox. Preston is in charge of daily activities. He must have meant nightly activities, too.

PRESTON  
But Gramps is locking the door?

LUCINDA  
I had keys made.

JUWAN  
I could teach Preston how to  
bartend.

RILEY  
We'll need to decorate.  
(beat)  
And get a few bodies for the  
coffins.

Preston's eyes open in fright at Riley.

LUCINDA  
We could cremate the teachers and  
the dog later.

Preston's eyes open wider at Lucinda.

JUWAN  
After the pizzas.

Preston's eyes open their widest at Juwan.

PRESTON  
Gramps isn't going to like this!

Riley laughs.

RILEY  
It should be a great show tonight.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

We see Riley in a tight black dress scanning the growing line of 20 Patrons (late-20s-40s). Next to Riley is Lucinda, who sets up a velvet purple rope at the entrance.

Behind Riley is a banner that reads, "Comedy Night at the Crypt with Riley O'Regan and special guest [Comedian's name]."

The Food Truck is in the street with signs that read, "Burned at the Steaks," "Everybody Fries," and "Fire and Brimstone Pizza."

RILEY

Send the camera crew in as soon as they get here.

LUCINDA

Will do. Better check on Preston. He's due for a meltdown.

RILEY

Juwan's helping him stay calm.

Father O'Brien stumbles past the line of Patrons and pushes past Lucinda into the funeral parlor.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Lost my wallet last time I was here. I'll get it and leave.

Lucinda rolls her eyes in disgust.

RILEY

Check the bar area.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - SAME

Preston is having a meltdown in the darkened Chapel with an empty, open casket off to the side, as Juwan consoles him behind the bar. The playlist is hip.

Father O'Brien quietly looks everywhere for his wallet. Everyone ignores him, and he is oblivious to everyone throughout the scene.

PRESTON

Can't do it! Can't do it!

JUWAN

Nothing to it. Make it fun! Make 'em what they want and charge 'em double. A Mai-Tai is just rum and fruit juice.

Preston smiles slightly.

PRESTON

I'll call it a Might-Die.

JUWAN

Nice. Tequila Sunrise. Tequila, orange juice, and grenadine.

Preston giggles.

PRESTON  
I'll call it a To-kill-ya Sunset.

JUWAN  
Daiquiri is just rum and citrus.

Preston laughs.

PRESTON  
I'll rename it a Die-quiri.

JUWAN  
Now you're getting into the spirits. And we don't need to change the Bloody Mary or the Corpse Reviver!

Preston's ex-girlfriend, DARLENE (30s), a beautiful redhead in a tight green dress, enters from the Prep Room. Preston sees her approaching and is furious.

PRESTON  
Darlene!

Juwan immediately turns his back so Darlene can't identify him.

Darlene glares at Juwan's back in anger, as Riley enters from the front and observes Darlene suspiciously.

DARLENE  
Does your Gramps know what you're doing?

PRESTON  
You ruined my Gramps's business with your no-frills cremations.

JUWAN  
Assholes to Ashes.

Darlene is frustrated that she can't identify Juwan.

DARLENE  
It's Ashes to Ashes. And I came here to ask for my job back after that hack you hired destroyed the place.

JUWAN  
She put the fun back in funerals!

PRESTON

And she warned us that you might  
try to sabotage tonight.

Darlene pulls Juwan's arm and yanks him around. She identifies Juwan.

DARLENE

(to Juwan)

You called in sick for this? You're  
fired!

(to Preston)

And I'm calling your Gramps!

Darlene pulls out her phone and starts to dial, but she turns and sees Riley charging toward her.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

I'll give you a funeral!

Preston sneaks behind Darlene and covers her mouth with a handkerchief (chloroform), as Juwan grabs her legs and lifts.

They carry Darlene to the open coffin and load her in.

RILEY

We warned everyone! Absolutely no  
photos, videos, or phone use during  
the performance.

Preston shut the coffin lids with a smile.

PRESTON

Let's get to work!

Riley and Juwan smile as the Camerawoman (30s) enters.

RILEY

Juwan, please help Lucinda with  
security. Preston, thanks. You  
don't have to do this!

PRESTON

Yes. I do.

Juwan exits, and Riley and Preston share a moment.

A famous, elder COMEDIAN (TBD; Cameo role) enters, and Riley leaps to meet him or her.

RILEY

Thanks for helping us out,  
[Comedian's name].

COMEDIAN  
Hope you knock 'em dead tonight.

RILEY  
We could use the business.

COMEDIAN  
Present company excluded, I hope.

The Comedian sees the bar and yells to Preston.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)  
Pour me something that will make me  
smarter.

PRESTON  
(smiles)  
Water it is. Brain cells!

COMEDIAN  
I imagine all the organs sell  
around here.

The Comedian nods and smiles at Preston.

The Patrons enter the Chapel, and the bar becomes loud.

Mac enters, and Riley is smitten as she runs to hug him, as she speaks over the chaos.

RILEY  
Mac, thanks for coming.

Preston looks on jealously.

MAC  
Glad to be here. Our club reopens  
tomorrow night, so this is great  
PR.

RILEY  
Can I get a slot? Like old times?

Preston's chin drops to his chest.

MAC  
Filled up now with serious  
comedians.

RILEY  
Isn't that an oxymoron?

MAC

If somebody pulls out, I can put you on the list. You understand?

RILEY

(sad)

Yeah. I understand.

Riley's chin drops to her chest.

MAC

Be happy. You found your niche. As a comedian, you make a great mortician. Now, that's funny.

Riley is stunned and sad, as Lucinda and Juwan race to her side to lend support and guide her away from Mac.

JUWAN

Not what she needed to hear!

LUCINDA

She's worked hard for this. Got the room, booked the talent, camera, food truck, bar...

LATER

Riley regains awareness in time to see the end of the Comedian's act, as the crowd roars with laughter.

COMEDIAN

It's true. When I was born, my mother asked the doctor to check my butt for an expiration date.

(laughter)

When I was five, Ma told me she believed in retroactive birth control.

(laughter)

Wanted to take me out years ago!

(laughter)

How many of you, for your thirteenth birthday, were given a burial plot by your parents?

The crowd's laugh is interrupted by a moan from the coffin. The Comedian glances back at the coffin but maintains his/her composure as he/she points to the coffin.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

If that's a dead heckler, it's time for me to go.

(laughter)

(MORE)

## COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

Luckily, it's time to bring in our host, Ms. Riley O'Regan.

(applause)

You've been a great audience tonight, and I wish I could stay here longer, but my people get nervous around ovens.

(laughter)

Let's give a warm welcome to Riley O'Regan!

The crowd erupts with laughter and applause as the Comedian returns the microphone to the mic stand and waves up Riley.

Mac stands off to the side, laughing and clapping.

Riley heads to the stage and gives the comic a warm hug, thanking him.

Out of the corner of Riley's eyes, she sees a Gorgeous Blonde (20s) in a tight red dress enter from the back of the room.

Riley takes the microphone from the stand, eyeing the Gorgeous Blonde, who races up to Mac and kisses him on the mouth, slow and long.

Riley's confidence is shaken, but she continues bravely, and the audience loves her from the start.

## RILEY

Welcome to our first and final Comedy Night at the Crypt. I'm Riley O'Regan, and we're coming to you live, and dead, from Cox's Funeral Parlor, where we put the fun in funerals.

(laughter)

My Irish relatives loved their funerals. My grandpa drank so much whiskey, when they cremated him, it took three days to put out the fire.

(laughter)

Grandpa knew he was going to heaven. He said God sending him to hell would be redundant.

(laughter)

That's when I knew. It's okay to die with dignity, but it's more fun to die with comedy.

(laughter)

How many of you have been to an autopsy?

Lucinda, Juwan, and Preston raise their hands as Riley giggles at them.

They hear another moan from the coffin, and Riley glances back and picks up her pace.

RILEY (CONT'D)

It's just like a colonoscopy for the whole body. I hope you washed your hands before serving the pizza.

(laughter)

Cremations are done in glorified pizza ovens. Did you know that?

(laughter)

Once, we set the dial to extra-crispy and the corpse started pounding on the glass window, yelling at me, "Open up! You got the wrong guy! I'm a vegan! Did you use non-dairy cheeses on this pizza?" I yelled back, "You were found guilty of a mass shooting, so we added extra sausage to give you gas!" He looked at me sadly and said, "Don't forget to add the balsamic drizzle!"

The crowd laughs, but Riley's eyes turn to the back of the Chapel, where she sees Police Officer #1 sneak in to observe.

Riley continues at a faster pace.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Remember when Johnny Depp shot the ashes of Hunter S. Thompson out of a cannon at his funeral.

(pauses for nods)

I want my ashes shot by a cannon into the wind so that anybody foolish enough to come to my funeral gets it in the face.

The crowd laughs as Police Officer #1 glares at Riley.

Riley sees Police Officer #2 enter from the back.

RILEY (CONT'D)

I saw an ad for a human mulcher machine that grinds you up into fertilizer.

(chuckles)

My literary friends would say that's "Mulch adu about nothing."

(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)

(laughter)

My comic friends would say, "She's been spreading that shit for years."

The crowd laughs as Riley glares into Mac's eyes.

RILEY (CONT'D)

My ex-boyfriend would say, "She finally made the world a better place."

The crowd sighs with compassion as Riley gazes into Mac's eyes.

Mac looks away as Police Officer #1 approaches Riley and Police Officer #2 approaches Preston.

RILEY (CONT'D)

That's about all the time that we have.

(groans)

But my goal is never to just leave you! My goal is to leave you with stories to tell. I'm Riley O'Regan, and I thank you.

The crowd claps and cheers. Riley is a hit.

Police Officer #2 puts cuffs on a frightened Preston.

The crowd gives Riley a standing ovation. She modestly bows and mouths "thank you," adding...

RILEY (CONT'D)

Remember to tip your servers. They're the ones with the autopsy saws!

Police Officer #1 puts cuffs on Riley.

POLICE OFFICER #1

I'm afraid Mr. Cox is pressing charges: Breaking and entering...

RILEY

We didn't break anything.

Riley glares at Mac, leaving with his beautiful date.

RILEY (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

A couple of hearts were broken.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
Serving alcohol without a license.

Preston smiles and turns proud.

PRESTON  
Have you tried my To-kill-ya  
Sunset, they're to die for!

Riley smiles at Preston, as the Comedian sneaks up behind  
Riley and hands her a lawyer's Business Card.

RILEY  
And don't even try to tell me about  
our right to remain silent. This  
story's going viral!

COMEDIAN  
(whispers to Riley)  
Call my Uncle Leo. He'll have you  
out by morning.  
(beat)  
Or next month if he's still in  
Aruba.

Riley nods a thank-you, as the cheering and laughter  
continue, until Police Officer # 2 yells.

POLICE OFFICER #2  
The rest of ya, get lost, or you'll  
be next!

No one moves until they hear Darlene SCREAM from the coffin,  
and there's a mad rush for the door.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

In the background, we see the Food Truck closing up and  
pulling away at the sight of the police car.

As Riley and Preston are led out by the Police Officers, a  
female TV Reporter (30s) and a Camerawoman (30s) rush up.

Riley and Preston slow down to a crawl to meet the TV camera,  
while the police pull them more aggressively.

Mr. Cox, wearing a bathrobe, slippers, and a bandage on his  
nose, storms over to Riley and Preston. He is too angry and  
flustered to speak.

TV REPORTER  
Riley O'Regan, we understand you  
illegally held an event...

RILEY  
Comedy Night at the Crypt.

PRESTON  
It was wrong, Gramps, we know, but  
one hundred percent of the proceeds  
are going to charity.

RILEY  
For homeless shelters and funerals  
for the extremely poor.

PRESTON  
Plus, we all laughed a lot!  
Especially when my ex-girlfriend  
screamed from the coffin.

Riley and Preston share a moment before the Police Officers  
continue to forcefully pull them toward the police car.

MR. COX  
Ms. O'Regan, you're fired again.  
And, Preston, you're fired, and I'm  
disowning you, cutting you off, and  
kicking you out. Darlene will be  
taking over daily operations.

RILEY  
Daily operations? You mean Botox  
injections, bleeding by leeches,  
and head transplants?

Mr. Cox fumes with anger, turns, and storms away.

The police officers finally reach the car with Riley and  
Preston, where Darlene angrily waits to file a complaint with  
Police Officer #2.

Riley turns to see Father O'Brien stumble out of the funeral  
parlor with a big smile and holding up his wallet.

FATHER O'BRIEN  
Call off the search! I found my  
wallet.

Riley and Preston smile and wave to the priest.

PRESTON  
He found it behind the bar.

RILEY  
In an altar boy's front pockets?

The police officers angrily shove them in their patrol car, as Riley stares at the lawyer's business card: "TALK IS CHEAP until you have to talk to Uncle Leo, Attorney at Law."

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

In the back of the funeral parlor, Riley helps Preston load his belongings into the back of a hearse. The mood is sullen as Preston loads the last of his personal belongings into the hearse, including a human skeleton, a beachball, three folding camp chairs, a sleeping bag, and a camping stove. Riley wears a cute tank top and shorts. Preston wears high-end camping clothes.

RILEY

Is this your car?

PRESTON

May be why the med students avoided me.

RILEY

Where will you live?

PRESTON

In the car. Comfortably sleeps one forever.

RILEY

Or two uncomfortably, wide awake all night?

PRESTON

Want to join me? Camp out in national parks, state beaches...

RILEY

Or retirement communities to scare the shit out of the residents? No thanks.

PRESTON

Where will you go?

RILEY

Back to waiting tables, scrounging for gigs in the smaller comedy clubs.

PRESTON

Smaller clubs than this?

RILEY

There's the "Comedy Sell-out Club" in upstate New York, "Improv for the Dead Club" in Oakland, and the Not-Laughing My Ass Off Club" in Des Moines.

PRESTON

Wow, lots of choices.

Lucinda and Juwan drive up in a new Brand Convertible and slam on the brakes.

LUCINDA

'Sup, dogs.

Riley and Preston tilt their heads, bewildered.

JUWAN

Turns out, Darlene was running Ashes to Ashes into the ground.

LUCINDA

Buried the bottom line.

JUWAN

Crazy woman torched two or three bodies at a time, trying to cut costs.

LUCINDA

Got the coroner and law down on her.

RILEY

For splitting heirs?

JUWAN

They fired her butt.

PRESTON

Fired her butt?

RILEY

That's irony.

LUCINDA

I got her manager's job, double her salary, and I could hire an assistant!

Juwan dances in his seat.

PRESTON  
Glad it worked out well for you.

JUWAN  
You too, I bet.

LUCINDA  
Once the coroner talks to Mr. Cox,  
he'll have to fire Darlene, and  
he'll have to take you both back!

PRESTON  
You don't know Gramps. He's got one  
foot in the past and one foot in  
the grave. I'm going camping.

Juwan stares at Preston's hearse.

JUWAN  
You don't think the other campers  
are gonna feel nervous parked next  
to a hearse and with you and a  
skeleton around the campfire?

Preston shrugs sadly and looks at Riley.

RILEY  
Don't look at me. You're the one  
dying to go camping. I'm heading to  
Des Moines, where I'll be dying on  
stage.

LUCINDA  
(pleas to them)  
Promise me you'll talk to Mr. Cox  
before you go.

Preston and Riley look at each other, unconvinced.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - SAME

The Chapel is immaculate with somber music in the background.

Darlene and Gramps stand around with nothing to do.

INT. COMEDY CLUB STAGE - SAME

Mac paces on stage, yelling into his phone. His completely  
bored girlfriend files her fingernails at a table in the  
front row.

MAC

I know it went viral. Who could have guessed?!

(pauses to listen)

We were close, but not that close!

(pauses to listen)

Okay, we were sleeping together, but I didn't think she was that funny!

(pauses to listen)

I've got a club to fill tonight! I can't do it with rookie headliners!

Mac pauses to listen as his girlfriend, who is now filing her toenails, looks up and glares at Mac, which Mac sees.

Mac turns his back on her.

MAC (CONT'D)

What do you mean, [Comedian's name] refuses to work with anybody but Riley?! She's a nobody! I was the one who discovered her!

(pauses to listen)

Promise her anything?! Get her back or I'm what?

Mac turns to see that his new girlfriend is gone.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Across the street from the funeral parlor, Preston and Riley have set up camp. We can't tell from the camera angle that they are very close to the funeral parlor.

Riley, Preston, and the skeleton sit in camp chairs around the camp stove with a coffee pot cooking.

They drink coffee from tin cups with sad expressions.

The doors of the hearse are open, and we can hear Western camping music from the playlist. [Marshall Tucker's "Desert Skies."]

Riley's phone RINGS to a morbid ring tone. She pulls out her phone and is stunned to see a row of messages and unanswered calls.

RILEY

Shit! Had the ringer off! Who's been... It's Mac.

PRESTON

Answer it!

RILEY

Hello, Mac. Before you speak, I just want to say that I'll never work with you again except for an autopsy with extreme prejudice, freakish post-mortem makeup, premature cremation, or live burial. Other than that, I don't want to see or hear from you again.

(beat)

On the plus side, a slot opened up at the med school you applied for.

Riley ends the call, with Preston's eyes wide open.

Riley's phone RINGS again.

RILEY (CONT'D)

It better not be... It's not.

(answers)

Hello?

(pauses to listen)

This is she.

Preston perks up and whispers.

PRESTON

If that's Gramps, tell him I'm not interested, but not so harsh. Don't want to give him a heart...

Riley stands excited.

RILEY

You saw my act on YouTube?

Preston pulls out his phone and madly presses buttons.

RILEY (CONT'D)

You're kidding, right? Video call? Right now?

Riley looks around at their campsite.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Sure, why not?

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR OFFICE - SAME

Mr. Cox sits at his desk, answering non-stop calls on the phone. A list in front of him is filled with phone numbers to "return calls." Three of the same numbers are highlighted in yellow.

Father O'Brien walks in sober as a judge and unhappy.

FATHER O'BRIEN

My parishioners are asking questions! When's the food truck coming back?

MR. COX

Five people on my list asked the same stupid question. We're not running a food court!

FATHER O'BRIEN

And, the youth in the parish are demanding that the Funeral Parlor post its playlist on something called Spotify!

MR. COX

I got several phone calls about that, too!

(angry)

They weren't my selections, and we aren't hosting some kind of nightclub!

Father O'Brien leans in closely to whisper.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Then, I guess it's no use asking if you'll ever host another Happy Hour!

Mr. Cox looks down at the three highlighted numbers.

MR. COX

I thought I recognized your phone number!

Father O'Brien looks away sadly.

BACK TO:

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Riley is overjoyed as she ends the video call. Preston looks on with very mixed emotions. He's happy for Riley, but feeling miserable that he might lose her forever.

PRESTON

What? What did she say?

Riley leaps to hug Preston and kiss his cheek.

RILEY

Saw the entire Comedy Night at the Crypt show on YouTube, and leaked video from the security cameras in the Chapel...

PRESTON

(interrupting)

Leaked videos? Who would have done such a thing? That could ruin your career in the mortuary business.

RILEY

I don't have a career in the mortuary business.

Preston paces angrily.

PRESTON

Gramps must have leaked them! And he can't even surf the web without a life preserver! He needed Darlene's help!

Preston isn't listening to Riley.

RILEY

I mean, I'll be in the mortuary business, but in a TV studio.

PRESTON

All the drinking and fighting. Disrespect for the dead! It was all on the tapes.

Riley grabs Preston and forces him to stop pacing and listen.

RILEY

The network is giving me a thirty-minute unscripted reality show called "O'Regan's Funeral Parlor." Guaranteed thirteen episodes. Prime time.

(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)

The drinking, fighting, and  
disrespect...

(beat)

It's all in there. Thirty-K to  
start!

PRESTON

Thirty thousand dollars isn't much.

RILEY

Per episode, plus residuals and  
syndication! They loved me.

Preston is too stunned to respond, but the sadness in his  
face says what his lips do not say.

PRESTON

Happy for you.

Riley pulls Preston by the hand, and we see they were camping  
just behind the funeral parlor.

RILEY

Come with me. I'm going to get your  
job back.

Riley drags Preston to the door of the Funeral Parlor.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Riley storms into Mr. Cox's office with Preston in tow.

MR. COX

What are you two doing here?

RILEY

Preston can handle the sedate,  
respectful funerals like the old  
days. Fifth generation of Coxes.  
I've been a bad influence on him.

PRESTON

(looks away)

I wouldn't say that!

RILEY

This place just wasn't the perfect  
fit for me...

Mr. Cox angrily shows Riley several pages of notes in a phone  
log.

MR. COX

Perfect fit? Hundreds of perfectly healthy people are making reservations for our services here whenever they die? Rich people! Poor people. And dozens of pet owners!

RILEY

And that's bad?

Mr. Cox glares at Riley.

MR. COX

Thousands of dollars in offers right now to you, if you'll spice up the obituaries of their dearly departed with comedy!

Mr. Cox is fuming mad, but Preston is laughing.

RILEY

Really? There's money in that?

Mr. Cox glares at Riley.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Look at all those reservations... You must feel like a...

MR. COX

(interrupting)

That's enough, Ms. O'Regan!

PRESTON

(assertive)

I wanted to hear her joke.

RILEY

Like a fancy maître d'at a bad fast food restaurant.

Preston roars with laughter.

Mr. Cox yells at Preston.

MR. COX

You're under her evil spell! She's a bad seed. The Devil's spawn. Since you first met her, you've dropped out of medical school...

PRESTON

They asked me to leave.

MR. COX  
And ruined our business.

RILEY  
Preston modernized your dying  
business, no pun intended.

PRESTON  
(to Riley)  
Yes, it was. The pun, I mean!

Riley smiles at Preston.

RILEY  
(to Mr. Cox)  
You're mad 'cause you had to fire  
Darlene, and both Lucinda and Juwan  
got big jobs at Ashes to Ashes!

Mr. Cox is stunned!

MR. COX  
What?!

Preston pounds his fist on the desk.

PRESTON  
If we don't adapt, we go extinct.

Riley smiles at Preston, then leaps on him with her legs  
wrapped around his torso, which shocks Mr. Cox.

RILEY  
Thought you were never going to  
grow one of those!

PRESTON  
A fist?

RILEY  
A backbone!

Preston shows a devilish smile.

PRESTON  
That's not all I'm growing.

Preston kisses Riley long and hard on the lips.

RILEY  
You've come a long way, Preston  
Cox, even without your Gramps'  
business.

Riley dismounts Preston, who gets on one knee before Riley.

PRESTON

I love you more than the smell of  
embalming fluid in the morning.  
More than sitting in front of a  
cozy cremation fire. More than...

RILEY

(interrupts, smiles)  
That's enough. I get it.

Mr. Cox is baffled and disgusted by Preston and Riley.

MR. COX

I'm right here! I can hear you!

They ignore Mr. Cox for a moment longer before Riley glares at him.

RILEY

You give Preston back his old job.  
You let him hire Lucinda and Juwan  
at 25% more than they're being  
paid, with full medical and dental,  
and you let him run the business  
anyway he wants to!

PRESTON

And that's with a bar, a playlist,  
a food truck, and all the  
irreverence we can get away with!

Mr. Cox gets in Riley's face with an angry look.

MR. COX

And just what would I get in  
return?

Riley smiles.

RILEY

Your only chance to meet the sixth  
generation of Cox around here!

MR. COX

That's Coxes.

RILEY & PRESTON

Twin boys?

Riley and Preston laugh hysterically.

Mr. Cox's palm slaps his forehead and rolls his eyes in disgust before smiling and laughing along with them.

MR. COX  
Got yourselves a deal.

Riley hugs Preston and kisses him again

Mr. Cox exits, mumbling to himself.

MR. COX (CONT'D)  
I'll have to get the sign changed.

Riley and Preston giggle, but then Preston turns serious.

PRESTON  
Wait! What am I going to do with you away in Hollywood, making your unscripted reality show episodes?

Riley steps in, kissing close to Preston.

RILEY  
Maybe I can get the location changed a little closer to home.  
(beat)  
And a title change. "O'Regan's Funeral Parlor" just isn't funny!

Preston turns his head, perplexed.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CHAPEL - NIGHT

Mr. Cox stands at the entrance to the Chapel like a somber guard in his grey suit with a white carnation.

SUPER: "12 to 18 weeks later"

The original funeral parlor sign reading: "Cox Funeral Parlor. Five generations. Cox is the best!" has been modified to read, "Cox Funeral Parlor. ~~Five~~ Six generations (coming soon). Cox ~~is~~ are the best!"

Mr. Cox politely smiles and points to a donation jar which reads "For Charity Funerals" as the TV Reporter and the camerawoman approach.

TV REPORTER  
We're here for an interview after her act. We're working!

Mr. Cox points to the jar and says sternly.

MR. COX

So am I. Now you can afford double.

The reporter and TV repairman reluctantly drop money into the donation jar.

Mr. Cox smiles and holds a finger to his lips to be quiet.

The Reporter whispers to the camerawoman.

TV REPORTER

Roll tape.

We follow the Camerawoman into the Chapel, where the "Crowd" is laughing hysterically at Riley's previous joke. The "Crowd" includes all the Extras from the previous funerals, Preston, Lucinda, and Juwan (at one table with Father O'Brien), and the two Police Officers standing on each side of the stage.

Riley is dressed in a black pantsuit and sporting a small but noticeable baby bump, on a small makeshift stage in the Chapel. She's an extremely confident and seasoned comedian.

Behind Riley is a banner that reads, "Comedy Night at the Crypt with Riley O'Regan and friends."

RILEY

It's true, every week here is unusual. My dear friend Juwan handles all our cremations...

(points to Juwan,  
applause)

It was his idea to add the popcorn to make them more exciting.

(laughter, applause)

We're all doing our part to put the fun back in funerals.

(laughter, applause)

Take Father O'Brien, for example.

Riley points to Father O'Brien, who is tipsy and fun.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Right before the Osterman funeral, he told our bartender, and my partner, Preston, that he was heavily constipated.

(points at Preston)

My charming partner, everyone!

The crowd applauds vigorously as Lucinda kisses Juwan and smiles, in love!

RILEY (CONT'D)

Preston made Father O'Brien a tall cocktail of rum and prune juice, which he called a Rum Runner, and the good priest was slurring his words and running to and from the bathroom throughout the funeral.

(laughter)

Even the corpse was using an air freshener.

Father O'Brien toasts a glass of water and smiles at Riley as the crowd laughs hysterically at Riley's joke.

RILEY (CONT'D)

At the cemetery, he saw the grave site was eight feet long, four feet wide, and six feet deep, and told me that if that was for the outhouse, it would have to be much bigger!

(laughter)

And Lucinda, my best friend, Lucinda...

(points to Lucinda,  
applause)

I did the makeup for a homeless woman as part of the charity work you're all supporting tonight.

(some clapping)

Come on now, that's good work we're all doing, so let's give it up for us and the show's sponsors.

(huge applause)

We're talking quart-sized spray cans on fingernail polish.

(laughter)

Industrial-strength hair dye.

(laughter)

And wrinkle cream in a 55-gallon drum.

(laughter)

Lucinda said it's essentially the same cosmetics Dolly Parton uses!

The crowd roars with laughter as Riley takes a bow.

RILEY (CONT'D)

I want to thank the network and sponsors for this week's show.

(applause)

I'd like to thank my special guest star, [Comedian's name].

(applause)

(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)

This week's sponsor -- the  
Tupperware coffin, where everyone  
deserves one last burp, and Cox  
Funeral Parlor!

(huge applause)

And to all of you here and at home  
who help support funerals for the  
poor or forgotten.

(applause)

Tune in next week for our next  
episode! We love you. Good night!

Riley bows to a standing ovation. She hugs Preston, Lucinda,  
Juwana, Father O'Brien, and Mr. Cox while the show's credits  
roll.

We zoom to the banner, "Comedy Night at the Crypt."

FADE OUT.

THE END