

Screenplays by Michael Gieger

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"Customer Service"

By Michael Gieger

1. INT. ICE CREAM STORE - Day

ALAN (18) stands silently behind the cash register of an empty ice cream store with a disgusted countenance. A well dressed, irate, CUSTOMER (57) berates him. Customer wears an election pin reading "Re-elect Godfrey" on his lapel. A steady mid-summer rain soaks the coastal suburban sprawl beyond the store's front window.

CUSTOMER

Twelve dollas? You gotta... I mean it's a goddamn soda float for christ sake. Who pays... Where's the owner?

ALAN

I don't know.

CUSTOMER

Whaddaya mean you don't know, huh?

ALAN

I don't know.

CUSTOMER

I know you don't know! I'm asking what you mean when you say, 'you don't know'?

ALAN

I don't understand the quest-

Customer points to Alan's shirt.

CUSTOMER

See that? Isn't that the logo on the front of the building? Now if I'm not mistaken, that means you work here, correct?

ALAN

For now.

Customer rolls his eyes and lets out an aggravated sigh.

CUSTOMER

'For now'?... That's really the answer you wanna give me?

ALAN

Well, it's not an incorrect
answer..

Customer points and squints his eyes. Alan's boredom
intensifies.

CUSTOMER

You know I used to be your age
once too. Wanna know how I spent
my summers? G'head ask me.

Silence.

ALAN

Oh, you actually wanted me to-

CUSTOMER

Yeah, ask me.

Alan sighs.

ALAN

Why?

CUSTOMER

Because this is a teachable
moment, and it seems like it's
somehow my duty to teach you since
clearly your parents-

ALAN

How did you spend your summers?

CUSTOMER

Layin' brick out in the heat
surrounded by other HARD men! Bent
over, hammering away, busting my
sweaty, red ass from 9 tuh 5.

Alan's face tenses desperately trying to hold back
laughter.

ALAN

Layin' brick or suckin' dick?

Customer is taken aback by Alan's response.

CUSTOMER

What did you just sayda me?

Alan chuckles.

ALAN

Sorry, I just needed some
clarification on the context of

the story. I thought you said... I mean it sounded like... you know... Hey, you ever seen Brokeback Mountain?

CUSTOMER
Get me the owner!

ALAN
I told you, she's not here.

CUSTOMER
Well where the hell is she then?!

ALAN
Not here, so by definition she must be somewhere else.

CUSTOMER
You got a real mouth dontcha? Even at your age I never woulda dreamed of being so blatantly disrespectful to a customer. And it's always kids like you. With all your hair, and your "Hey maaaaan, let's do some pot behind the bleachers" attitudes.

(beat)

You know, if I had a dollar for every time some punk kid gave me shitty customer service I'd-

ALAN
Be able to afford this rootbeer float?

CUSTOMER
Forget the goddamn soda float, I want to speak to the owner now!

ALAN
So... you don't want the rootbeer float-

CUSTOMER
No! Get on the phone and call the owner if you say she's not here. I won't leave until I speak to her and report you.

ALAN
I can't do that.

CUSTOMER

Whadda you mean you can't?

ALAN

I don't work here anymore.

CUSTOMER

What?

ALAN

I quit.

CUSTOMER

You quit? How? Wha...waddaya mean you quit?

Alan shrugs.

ALAN

I don't know. It kinda sucks here.

CUSTOMER

Yeah and you know what else sucks? Life. And then you die. So how's about you call your boss huh?

ALAN

You're right. Life does suck. But everyone still has choices, and I just made mine.

CUSTOMER

Yeah? Well, I might choose to toss the contents of this ice cold beverage in your smug face if I don't get some fucking answers over here!

Alan rolls his eyes.

ALAN

I'm quitting because the alternative means I have to stay here, and take ear beatings from idiots like you, talkin' about the sweaty anal sex they used to have with the other boys on construction sites back in the day-

Customer makes a few flabbergasted noises.

ALAN (CONT.)

And, you know? I just realized that blows. Like a lot... as I'm sure you're aware. So, I'm just gonna split...

(beat)

I mean, if that's alright with you?

Alan turns his hat backwards and lights a cigarette. Customer gives an astonished 'pshh!' Alan grabs his raincoat. Customer continues to yell at Alan.

CUSTOMER

No! It's not 'alright'...

Customer reads Alan's name tag and spits out his name.

CUSTOMER (CONT.)

"Alan". I... I need to speak to someone... you... you can't do this! You have an obligation to resolve this issue, so do your fucking job!

ALAN

If I worked here I'd tell you that there is no need for that kind of language, but as I've already explained, I'm no longer an employee of The Scoop Shack. I quit about 15 seconds ago.

CUSTOMER

Donchu give me any of that condescending bullshit. I OWN this goddamn city! Do you have any idea who I-

The front door is kicked in by ROBBER (29), a large portly man soaked from the rain, with fully dilated pupils. He wears a white shirt depicting a farmer decapitating a lamb with a caption that reads: "L. Ron Hubbard hates meat eaters". Robber is wielding a 5 shot .38 revolver. He speaks loudly.

ROBBER

Every fucking one of you fucking motherfuckers shut the fuck up and be fucking cool. This is a fucking robbery!

Customer screams and puts his hands in the air, shrinking against the wall. Alan ashes his cigarette.

ALAN

Fuck, that's a lot of fucks.

Customer frantically points to the button on his lapel.

CUSTOMER

Don't shoot me! P..Please! You must know who I am.. I.. I have money!

Robber points his weapon at Customer.

ROBBER

Then empty your pockets bitch! And you! Open the goddamn register!

ALAN

Hey man, I don't work here. I was trying to tell your "bitch" over there the same thing but I don't think-

Customer fumbles through his pockets and nervously spills the contents of his wallet on the ground. Cash, coins, and cards cascade to the floor.

ROBBER

Shit! Come on asshole clean that up! Fast!

(points gun at Alan)

Hey fuckface, I said open the register! NOW!

ALAN

Do you mind lowering your voice? I mean it's just the three of us here, we could all hear you just fine at a normal vol-

ROBBER

NO! I shan't! For I have been sent by way of divine intervention to commandeer your funds, and I will

stop at nothing to acquire them!
Holy Xenu has declared a jihad
against the treasonous proprietors
of all animal products. Vegans
across the solar system are now
soldiers in his crusade!

There is a brief silence.

ALAN

I mean, are... are you sure?

Robber moves closer to the register, pointing the gun at Alan.

ROBBER

Yes heretic! I speak the truth!
Now the currency, cow milker!

ALAN

Ok listen Tom Cruise, I don't
really have time for this shit. I
was just about to leave before you
busted in here.

ROBBER

That's what she said, and you WILL
surrender the profits to me, or it
will mean your life! I am the
profit of The Galactic Emperor
Xenu, and I command you to-

Robber forcefully gestures the gun towards Alan in a
stabbing motion, attempting to pistol whip him. The gun
slips from his rain soaked grip and slides across the
counter to Alan. The two look at one another in shock.

ROBBER

Ummmm... look... we ahhh...

Alan grabs the gun and raises it to the Robber. Robber
backs away, nearly falling over Customer who continues to
gather his belongings from the floor.

ALAN

What do we do now, huh Tom?!

Customer springs up and backs away from Robber. The three of them form a triangle.

CUSTOMER

Shoot him you idiot! Shoot him! Do it! He was gonna kill us! Shoot him!

Customer continues to yell at Alan to pull the trigger. Robber raises his hands, and tries to reason with Alan.

ROBBER

Alright, alright... Listen, I'll be honest I've been doing a lot of mescaline lately, maybe a little meth here and there... read a few sci-fi books... And ahhh, you know here we are... But what do you expect? My thetan levels have been pretty low lately... Personally I'd be willing to forget this whole thing if you just put down the... the- ohhh shit.

Robber becomes transfixed by the floor.

CUSTOMER

Don't listen to him you fucking imbecile! He's on drugs! Kill him!

ALAN

Hey bud why don't you just get the fuck out, alright? I'll give you a head start on the Feds.

ROBBER

No can do... I think everything's just kinda hitting me all at once over here. The floor is now full of snakes... lots of snakes... which-

CUSTOMER

Just shoot him! Shoot him you fuck!

ALAN

No one's getting shot, asshole.
Relax.

CUSTOMER

No? Alright. Gimme this fuckin
thing-

Customer grabs the rootbeer float from the counter and throws it in Alan's face, as he reaches for the gun in Alan's hands. Amidst their struggle, Alan shoots Customer in the abdomen. Customer screams and collapses to the floor in pain. Blood seeps through his dress shirt.

CUSTOMER

You... you... you fucking shot me! And
you know who I am right? Don't
you?! Don't you?!

Alan seems panicked. Customer points to the pin on his lapel.

CUSTOMER (CONT.)

I'm the goddamn mayor! I'm Robert
Muthafuckin' Godfrey. As in, "Re-
elect Godfrey" you illiterate
swine! And my police escort is
next door ordering pizza!

2. INT. PIZZA PARLOR - DAY

Three police officers stare at the menu of a pizza parlor, holding up a long line of customers behind them. The pizza joint's OWNER writes down their order on a small notepad, wiping sweat from his brow. "Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Babe" by Barry White plays through the store's tinny speakers.

POLICE OFFICER #1

So what else you thinkin' Frank
some knots on the side? Maybe some
ganool?

POLICE OFFICER #2

Well, I don't know. We got the pie
already. You can get the knots but

I can't eat em. Lisa, you know she'll smell the garlic on me, and have my balls. She gets pissed when I eat before she cooks.

POLICE OFFICER #3

I know we ordered the pie already but I gotta tell ya guys, it's feelin' like a calzone kinda day for me right now.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Well, when you're right, you're right. Hate to do this to you bud, but can we change the order and get a calzone instead of the pie?

Owner gives the police officers a look of death and tears up the order slip.

3. INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

Alan places the gun on the counter and laughs nervously, running a hand through his hair. He takes out another cigarette and takes several intense drags off of it.

ALAN

Well... fuck me I guess.

Customer begins yelling painfully at Alan.

CUSTOMER

Oh? Fuck you? No. Fuck me! I'm dying! I'm bleeding out in an ice cream shop, on Jesus Christ, what is this linoleum? You piece of shit, I'm gonna-

ROBBER

HEY! Wait a minute... They're not snakes! They're penises! They're penises!

Robber turns and sprints for the door. He slams into the store's front window before finding the exit. He runs

maniacally down the street through the rain. Enter POLICE OFFICER #1 holding a pizza box, POLICE OFFICER #2 eating a slice of pizza, and POLICE OFFICER #3 sipping a soda through a straw.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Hey, Mr. Godfrey you gotta try a slice of this....

Seeing Customer writhing in a pool of blood on the ground and a gun on the counter in front of Alan, Police Officer #1 drops the pizza box and draws his weapon along with other officers.

POLICE OFFICER #2

Freeze! Get down on the ground!

Alan looks to Customer on the floor, and then to the police. Finally his eyes find the gun on the counter. His fingers wrap around the hilt. A slight smirk washes over Alan's face.

Alan

(To himself)

Life sucks and then you die.

Alan shrugs and raises the gun.

POLICE OFFICER #3

He's got a gun!

ALAN

What can I say? He had it coming.

Alan shoots Customer again. Gunshots echo behind black screen.

END.

"White Christmas"

Written By:

Michael Gieger

FINAL DRAFT.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - MIDNIGHT

It is a frigid Christmas Eve in upstate New York. MAN (53) wearing a wool trench coat stands on an empty forest road beside a broken down car.

Hazard lights wash over new fallen snow. The orange car lights pulse as MAN examines a bullet wound on his left shoulder. MAN winces as he conceals a red fireman's axe behind himself.

Headlights emerge 20 yards down the road. A curious FARMER (67) driving an old pickup, rolls down his window and drives up beside Man.

FARMER

Hell of a way to spend Christmas Eve.

MAN looks through FARMER'S soul.

MAN

Transmission's busted.

FARMER

Well, I ain't much of a mechanic but I can give you a lift into town. Where ya headed?

MAN

Just over to grandma's for some cookies and hot chocolate...Cold out, huh?

FARMER

Damn cold. C'mon hop in. This is no place to be alone this time o' night. If the cold don't kill ya the wolves will, he-he.

Man glances down at the axe and grins. He approaches the car.

MAN

You're right.

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT

The Farmer's pickup follows signs for an Interstate 91 offramp reading "Rest Stop". Man coasts the truck into the empty rest stop lot and hides it behind the building.

MAN takes a deep breath and winces, examining the wound on his shoulder. He exits the truck and opens the back door to retrieve his axe.

A limp, bloody arm protrudes from the open door. MAN puts the arm back inside the car and turns to enter the rest stop.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE- NIGHT

LEON (36) and FLOYD (32) lean against a wall beneath a brightly lit cinema marquee. The town is silent. It is well after the theater has closed.

They are freezing their balls off. A light snow falls as they observe two young men and a woman enter the church across the street. Floyd hits a joint and passes it to Leon.

FLOYD

It's a cult right?

Leon blows smoke and flashes Floyd a confused look.

FLOYD

Church. I'm tellin' you man. They dress up like wizards and sing songs about eating bodies. It's fucked up.

Leon coughs and tosses the roach, cursing under his breath.

FLOYD

Hey, you ever hear "Jesus" means "mushroom semen" in ancient Sumarian? Look it up. They're

nuts, man. You know the Bible talks about aliens and--

LEON

Would you shut the fuck up! Damn. We're on the clock here. C'mon we'll hit 'em out back.

INT. CHURCH LOBBY- NIGHT

The church is having a midnight Christmas Eve service. HARRY (25), JANE (23), and ALAN (18) enter the church lobby. They are dressed far too casually for the occasion.

The church is decorated with candles. The three of them are greeted by CHURCH PATRON (72). She smiles and hands them each a pamphlet. Harry skims aimlessly through the pamphlet before tossing it in a garbage can.

INT. REAR CHURCH PEW - NIGHT

Organ music blares as Harry and Alan slump into their seats. Jane slinks next to Harry and blows bubbles with her gum. PRIEST (58) begins a sermon. A churchgoer starts coughing loudly offscreen.

HARRY

You believe this shit?

JANE

What?

HARRY

That guy. Unbelievable. I mean, stay the hell home if you can't shut up. Goddam nails on a chalkboard.

JANE

I don't know. These people are old. Maybe he's got lung cancer?

HARRY

All the more reason for him to stay the fuck home. I don't need his cancer. It blows my mind that we just allow people to cough

their brains out at full volume in public. No one bats an eye!

Jane laughs.

JANE

I didn't know coughs struck such a nerve with you. I mean coughing isn't even something you can help-

HARRY

Yes it is! You can hold in a fart can't you? And if it's an emergency, and you clench hard enough, you can use your cheeks as a silencer. So, don't tell me it's impossible to hold a cough in—or at least muffle the motherfucker with a pillow or an arm or something.

A CHURCH PATRON II (85) in front of them gives them a brief glare.

JANE

But farts are different. They smell awful. And they come out of-

HARRY

So? When was the last time a cough made you laugh? Farts are funny. They smell and make hilarious noises. But, society deemed them "socially unacceptable". Coughing on the other hand, spreads disease. It's also loud and obnoxious. We've got it all backwards. I say fuck society, let 'em rip.

ALAN

You know a trace amount of feces is present in every fart.

CHURCH PATRON II

Shhhhh!

They are silent for a moment.

JANE

You're disgusting, Harry.

Jane pops her gum and sticks it under her seat.

HARRY

I know, right?

JANE

Hey Alan, can I get a piece of your gum?

Alan rips off a piece.

ALAN

What, this? This isn't gum, its acid.

JANE

Acid?! What is wrong with you? I thought we agreed to act like professionals this time.

ALAN

Relax, Jane. We deal drugs. Go ahead, rat me out to HR.

Harry punches Alan in the shoulder and points to the crucifix above the church altar.

HARRY

Jesus. Jesus and God that's what you need Alan.

ALAN

No way, man. God is all of us. Everything.

The service ends and they are among the few still left in the church. The PRIEST and an USHER (38) signal for them to follow them outside.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Harry, Jane, Alan, the Priest, and the Usher are gathered around a '70s muscle car. The trunk is open, revealing several packaged kilograms of assorted narcotics.

HARRY

Coke, H, pot, crystal, 'ludes,
fuckin' elephant tranquilizers.
Whatcha lookin to buy?

The Priest speaks in a thick New York City accent.

PRIEST

10 kilos. Coke. And I try the
product first. If it doesn't kick
like a 12 gauge to the balls, you
ain't gettin' oogatz. Ya last
batch was dogshit. Might as well
have been pushin' baking soda.
Couldn't sell a goddam sack. Fuck
me like that again, see what
happens.

Harry puts his hands up defensively.

HARRY

Sniff away my man. This is the
shit that killed Billy Mays.
Straight outta some spik hut in
the asscrack of the fuckin the
Amazon. Pablo would be proud of
this shit, I'm tellin' you.

Priest takes a hit.

PRIEST

Woوو! Yeah! Alright... Yeah, we'll
take it.

Jane motions to her nose.

JANE

You got a little... no... use the
robe... yeah you got it.

Usher hands Alan a duffle bag.

PRIEST

Narcotics Anonymous meets here every Tuesday night of the new year, AA every Thursday. There'll be more where that came from if you keep bringing me powder like this.

The sounds of rustling bushes and footsteps are heard offscreen. Leon and Floyd enter, flaunting pistols on their hips.

LEON

Ho ho ho gentlemen! Well, looks like it is a White Christmas after all...

Leon looks intensely at Priest and Usher.

LEON

Go on, walk with Jesus 'n shit. This don't concern you.

Priest and Usher exit.

LEON

Harry, right?

HARRY

H--hey, listen we don't have to--

LEON

Oh, no. We must. It's the season of giving! You took, so now you gotta give.

HARRY

Look, I get it. We have the shit, just take it. We're unarmed--

JANE

What?! Why would you--

Leon and Floyd laugh.

LEON

Unarmed? Damn Floyd, this is some real pathetic shit.

FLOYD

Rookie move my friend.

FLOYD displays his pistol to Harry.

FLOYD (CONT)

Now, I recommend one of these for a job like this. Lightweight and concealable. But it'll still blow the ass off a giraffe if you--

The pistol accidentally discharges and hits Harry's knee cap. Harry screams in pain. Jane yells in distress. Alan gapes silently.

LEON

The fuck? Asshole! What's wrong with you!

FLOYD

I didn't--

LEON

Yes you did! You shot him in the knee cap. That's the most painful area on the body to take a bullet. I mean what the f--

FLOYD

It just went off, man I'm sorry. You know, I was showing him what's up, and I got kinda excited so--

LEON

Excited?! You know what we gotta do now right? You shot this dude, and now he's waking up the whole town. And the rest of 'em..

Leon and Floyd turn to Jane, Harry, and Alan, raising their pistols. Leon looks at Floyd and shakes his head.

LEON

It's Christmas man, you're not supposed to shoot mutherfuckers on Christmas...

Alan pulls out a gun and shoots Harry. He takes out the magazine and tosses the gun at Leon's feet.

ALAN

You got what you wanted. Take the keys and the money. Leave us alone.

Leon and Floyd look astonished. They holster their guns.

LEON

Damn son, alright. God bless...

ALAN

There's no God. We're all just lambs, lost in a forest filled with wolves.

CUT TO:

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT

The gleaming '70s muscle car rumbles into the seemingly empty rest stop parking lot. Leon and Flyod exit the car and enter the rest stop.

INT. REST STOP BATHROOM - NIGHT

Man sits in the last stall, stitching up what appears to be a bullet wound on his shoulder. Leon and Floyd enter the bathroom mid-conversation. Man listens silently. Leon uses the urinal and Floyd goes to the mirror to comb his hair.

LEON

--You know me, I ask the fat fuck what the problem is and he tells me, 'it ain't Christian'.

FLOYD

Yeah?

LEON

I said what's Jesus gotta do with it? She was practically begging

me. I mean you were 16 once. What, am I gonna say no to a nun?

Floyd laughs.

FLOYD

So you cucked God... Right on man.

LEON

Huh?

FLOYD

Well, nuns, you know they're like married to God n' shit. So if you fuck one of them...

Leon chuckles.

LEON

Yeah I guess so. Never thought of it like that.

The urinal flushes and Leon lights a cigarette.

FLOYD

How much can we flip that pow for?

LEON

I'm guessing we got about 30 and it's what, 80 a gram these days? So... shit, man I didn't make the damn math team. A shit ton how 'bout that?

FLOYD

Not bad. A sack of cash and a trunk-full of blow... best Christmas I've ever had.

Leon smiles and shakes his head as he adjusts his belt. His eyes fixate on his shoes.

LEON

Hey, do you remember what that kid said to us? You know, just before we left.

FLOYD

Nah, man. I was distracted by the size of his balls.

LEON

It was something about... I don't know. Some real crazy shit... Got me thinkin'--

FLOYD

Whatever man, that kid was on acid. I could see it in his eyes, believe me.

Floyd looks in the mirror for the last time as he backs away.

FLOYD (CONT.)

I gotta take a shit.

Floyd looks through his options for stalls and sees they are all either clogged, or covered with bodily fluids. Floyd goes to the last stall and notices it is locked. Floyd kicks the door open to find Man standing behind it with the axe. Offscreen Floyd screams. Man exits the stall covered in blood. Leon fumbles for his gun and drops it. Man kicks it away from him and closes in.

MAN

Keys.

Leon hands over the keys and leans against a wall. Man grins.

MAN

Can I tell you a story?

LEON

What?

MAN

Well, it's less of a story, and more of a lesson in history. Do you enjoy history?

LEON

No.

MAN

In the year 1450, a winter like no other brought France to its knees. It snowed for weeks. People froze to death in their homes huddled around fires--

LEON

You're a fucking maniac.

MAN

Shh-shh, let me finish. Now, in those days Paris was only a small city surrounded by forest. And one night a pack of starving wolves came out of that icy wood and made their way into the city. They knew the city was warm. And the city had food. In that winter alone the pack killed and ate forty people.

LEON

Why are you telling me this?

MAN

Because it begs an age old question which theism has no answer for: Why would God make his people lambs, if the world is full of wolves?

The axe scrapes against the bathroom tile.

CUT TO:

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT

Man opens the trunk of the car and grins. He hops in the car and turns the ignition. The radio is loud as he drives into the night.

END.

Thin Air

written by

Michael Gieger

1. EXT. SKI MOUNTAIN - DAY

Snow is falling. BILLY (18) holds a pair of skis over one shoulder. A blank look clings to his face. Suddenly Billy rubs his eyes, and looks around in confusion. He's in a long line of people waiting for the gondola up to the peak.

BILLY
I hate skiing...

The snow falls harder, blanketing Billy's shoulders and helmet. He reaches the front of the line and is waved forward by a lift attendant, who signals him to board the gondola. Billy approaches and is about to stow his skis in the gondola door when an oblivious stoner, DAN (28), clips Billy in the face with the back of his snowboard.

Billy clutches the side of his face. Dan shoves past Billy into the gondola with his girlfriend CHRISTINE (24), who giggles at Billy as she passes.

BILLY
Watch the board there, bud.

Dan smiles at Billy and points at his snowboard.

DAN
Pretty tight huh? Yeah, just waxed her. It's deep-dickin' time for this bitch-ass mountain, man! Haha fuck yeah!

Dan licks his snowboard like he's making out with someone. Dan turns back to Billy and makes the "Shaka" sign with a gloved hand and hops in the gondola. Billy shakes his head and enters the doorway.

2. INT. GONDOLA - DAY

Billy takes his seat beside a frosty window on the bench across from Christine and Dan. He looks out at the snow. Dan air drums out of time to the pop-punk song blasting through his headphones. Christine goes on her phone, sipping from a piping hot thermos of coffee.

When the doors are seconds from closing, MR. DILLON (37), a large portly man wearing a red ski patrol jacket stumbles

noisily into the gondola. Mr. Dillon falls onto the bench crushing Billy against the window. The gondola doors close and the car zooms out of the station. Dan hits an enormous vape and blows a cloud that drifts into Billy's face. Mr. Dillon reaches into his jacket pocket and produces a flask. He takes a swig and turns to Billy.

MR. DILLON

The only thing that gets me
through the day to day horror, am
I right or am I right?

Mr. Dillon offers Billy the flask. Billy shakes his head no.

MR. DILLON (CONT'D)

Good man. A better man than I. You
know when I was your age, I once
blew a homeless guy's pet German
Shepard behind a bowling alley for
a bottle of whiskey.

Billy is repulsed.

MR. DILLON (CONT'D)

I'm only joshing you, my boy! Just
a joke... a joke...

Mr. Dillon takes a swig. He looks out the window with the expression of someone remembering a traumatic memory. There is a brief pause. Mr. Dillon addresses everyone in the gondola.

MR. DILLON (CONT'D)

Hey, here's a riddle for you guys:

CHRISTINE

Oh please god no.

MR. DILLON

A plane takes off from Chicago and
crashes on its way to Montreal.
When the rescue team gets to the
crash site, they realize the plane
wrecked itself right smack on the
border between the U.S. and
Canada. Where do they bury the
survivors?

DAN

In America, where they belong.
Goddamn Canadians... they did
Pearl Harbor ya know.

CHRISTINE
That was Japan, Dan.

DAN
Oh, was it Christine? Were you there? No. So how do we know for sure the Canadians didn't do it?

CHRISTINE
I... I can't with you. I went to college. I have a degree in sports nutrition. I know these things.

MR. DILLON
Jesus Christ with you people! It's a riddle, not junior high debate club.

BILLY
You don't bury anyone. You said "where do you bury the survivors". You can't bury people who are alive. Unless you're a murderer I guess.

MR. DILLON
Haha very good! At least there's someone on this mountain who's not a dumpster demon from hell.

CHRISTINE
Who you callin' dumpster, Old Navy? Bitch, even my socks are Louis Vuitton.

Billy and Mr. Dillon meet eyes.

BILLY
I see what you mean. But, everyone knows that riddle. It's not that impressive.

MR. DILLON
You'd be surprised. I like to think that riddle separates the dead from the living; the awake from the sleeping. So have a drink, son. You're alive.

BILLY
You're really not gonna let go of this drink offer are you?

MR. DILLON

C'mon! It's cold out. Live a little.

BILLY

Screw it.

Billy takes a sip from the flask. His face cringes from the taste.

CHRISTINE

Ugh. I hate gin. I can smell it from here. I blacked out on that shit once.

MR. DILLON

Oh come on, it puts hair on your chest!

DAN

Don't worry bro she already has some of that.

Christine smacks Dan on the arm. Billy hands back the flask. He gestures to Mr. Dillon's ski patrol patch.

BILLY

Hey so how'd someone like you end up doing this?

MR. DILLON

Believe it or not they'll hire anyone to do this job because no one else wants to.

BILLY

Well, do you like it? Is it a good job at least?

MR. DILLON

Good job? Please... Ya know, people glorify us and think we save lives, but honestly most of this gig is just riding up and down this god forsaken lift.

Mr. Dillon chugs the rest of the alcohol. Billy looks at him concerned.

BILLY

Well at least you're not on duty...uhhh

(reading Mr. Dillon's name tag)

Mr. Dillon. Right?

Mr. Dillon shakes the empty flask.

MR. DILLON

I *am* on duty, William. But those fucks guarding Epstein's cell were too, so I figure what the hell.

Mr. Dillon smiles.

BILLY

How did you know my-

MR. DILLON

Name?

BILLY

Yeah. My name's Billy. But my parents used to call me William.

MR. DILLON

Uhhh, yeah ya know that's just what I call everyone. Watch this.

Mr. Dillon smacks Dan on the helmet to get his attention.

MR. DILLON

Hey Willie boy! Sharing is caring, am I right? Hehe.

Mr. Dillon snatches Dan's vape and takes a hit before tossing it out the window.

DAN

Bro? Like... what the fuck bro?

MR. DILLON

There's no smoking or vaping inside the gondola. It's the mountain's policy *bro*.

Suddenly, the gondola stops. The car sways in the wind, suspended several stories above a forest. The snow storm intensifies.

BILLY

Oh jeez! Don't panic. Oh god, keep it together. If we're stuck up here for a while, promise none of you will resort to cannibalism.

DAN

Haha. Cannabis, this dude knows. He knows! Up top!

MR. DILLON

Enough with the cannibalism,
Billy! We all know my fat ass
would be the first course, so
don't give these animals any
ideas.

Mr. Dillon grabs his stomach and jiggles his fat. Christine gestures to her body.

CHRISTINE

Ummm, it's called bulimia? That's
how you get that's how you get
this figure. Just use your finger
and you won't get bigger! But now
that you mention it, I bet you
taste just like veal.

MR. DILLON

I'm sure your boyfriend is
delighted that you're so well
acquainted with the various meats.
God help us if this thing doesn't
move soon.

Billy looks at his hands, waving them in front of his face slowly.

BILLY

Woah! My heart is racing. What did
you put in that gin, Mr. Dillon?

MR. DILLON

Acid, why?

BILLY

What the fuck!

DAN

Don't worry guys, everything is
gonna be okay.

CUT TO:

OVER BLACK:

SUPER: 5 minutes later...

3. INT. GONDOLA - DAY

Dan is standing up, pounding frantically on the gondola door. Billy and Christine protest for him to stop.

DAN

THIS IS NOT OKAY! LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT!

CHRISTINE

Dan, you're a fucking idiot. What are you gonna do? Grow wings? We're stuck here! There's nothing we can do!

DAN

Christine, remember on our first date when I told you to call me Courage the Un-cowardly Dog because I have no fears? Well I just realized, when I said that, I forgot about being stuck in a gondola ten stories in the air. Because I'm actually REALLY afraid of being stuck in a gondola ten stories in the air!

CHRISTINE

I HATE YOU!

BILLY

Stop yelling! This gondola is melting like butter. Are we all just butter? Is that life? Are we all melting away on some fucked up geothermal English muffin? Wait, no! Stay focused! Let's try and think.

Christine takes a sip of coffee.

CHRISTINE

Think? Okay, I have some thoughts: Billy you're a virgin, Mr. Dillon you have the IQ of a drunken baboon, and Dan-

The wind howls, breaking the gondola doors open. Skis and equipment tumble out of the door and into the forest. Everyone yells and clings to their seats.

BILLY

Why in fuck's name did I decide to ski today?! I hate skiing! I don't even remember getting in line.

DAN

I've been thinking the same thing all day bro. How'd I get here? I can't even remember where I put my car keys.

CHRISTINE

Not like that matters anyway. We didn't drive to the mountain. All I remember...the line... and the gondola. Dan, how the hell did we get here?

Dan, Christine, and Billy look at each other, puzzled. Mr. Dillon whistles "She Said She Said" by the Beatles as he fidgets with his jacket zipper. He drunkenly slurs a lyric or two.

MR. DILLON

"She said, I know what it's like to be dead. I know what it is to be sad."

An aura of realization washes over Billy.

BILLY

I know why I'm here.

CHRISTINE

What? Tell us, Billy! Give me some answers!

BILLY

This is the last thing I remember before I got in line for the gondola:

CUT TO:

4. INT. ICE CREAM STORE - DAY

Billy stands behind the cash register of an ice cream store. He is wearing a shirt and a matching hat with the words "The Scoop Shack" written across them. A gun is resting on the counter before him. In front of the counter a man lies dead in a pool of blood. POLICE OFFICER and two other officers crouch by the doorway with their weapons drawn at Billy.

BILLY

You've got the wrong guy! He just took off down the block!

POLICE OFFICER
He's got a gun!

Gunshots echo behind a black screen.

5. INT. GONDOLA - DAY

BILLY
I... I think I'm... dead. I think
we're all dead.

Dan shivers and lets out a whimper. Christine looks nervously at Dan, as if expecting a different reaction from him.

CHRISTINE
If we're all dead then we must be
in hell.

Dan peers out of the open door into the emptiness below them. He looks to the top of the mountain. A yellow beacon rolls across the sky from its summit, peaking through the clouds.

DAN
I don't know about that. Down
there seems a lot less fun than up
here. Why can't this thing move!

CHRISTINE
Because we're stuck... between
here and there. It's like we're
in... what's that called?

Billy peers out the window.

BILLY
Purgatory. I guess John Lennon was
wrong, because there is quite
literally a Hell below us.

MR. DILLON
Ding ding ding, and now the fat
lady sings! Took ya long enough.
Me? I've been dead since '05. I
did too much coke one night and a
400 pound man in a scooter threw
me off the deck of one of those
floating horror shows you people
call cruises. I was adrift for 6
days in the ocean before the
sharks found me. So Christine, the
next time you're wondering what

Mr. Dillon's flesh might taste like, why don't you take a boat 100 miles off the stunning coast of Punta Cana and ask the local community of Caribbean Reef Sharks if I taste like veal or not!

CHRISTINE

That's your own trashy fault for taking a cruise. I fly private.

DAN

Wait wait wait, it's all coming back to me...

CHRISTINE

No, don't!

CUT TO:

6. INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Christine stands at a podium in front of Dan's casket. She addresses those in attendance. A slide picture of Dan is projected onto a screen beside the casket. Christine sobs as she speaks. Mascara runs down her cheeks.

CHRISTINE

Those of you who knew Dan and I know I loved him. He was everything I asked for in a man. Loyal, kind, loving...

Christine's feigned sadness snaps into a maniacal and angry expression.

CHRISTINE

Until he cheated on me!

Christine changes the slide on the projector revealing pictures of Dan making out with SIDE PIECE (22). Gasps are heard from the audience.

CHRISTINE

That's right your golden Daniel was a cheating sack of shit. And I'm the reason this is a closed casket funeral! I'm the one who pushed him in front of that train! Hahaha! You-

DAN'S FATHER

Whore!

Dan's father tackles Christine, choking her to death.

CUT TO:

INT. GONDOLA - DAY

CHRISTINE

Wait, how did you remember your own funeral? You were already dead.

DAN

The fuck does that matter? Bitch, you murdered me!

CHRISTINE

Because you cheated on me!

Christine smiles and rolls her eyes. Now she tells the truth.

CHRISTINE (CONT.)

And I would've gotten your inheritance if I didn't get choked to death by your father!

MR. DILLON

I swear I saw a porno once that ended the same way...

Dan stands up again, and Christine with him, setting her thermos of coffee down on the bench. Dan gets in her face.

DAN

I'm gonna fucking kill-

Christine kisses Dan on the lips.

CHRISTINE

Bye bye pumpkin-pie.

Christine shoves Dan out of the gondola door. He screams as he falls. Christine turns nonchalantly from the door and sits back down. Billy yells and is stunned. Mr. Dillon peers out of the door unfazed. Dan's mutilated corpse is strewn about the rocks below them.

MR. DILLON

You alright down there bud? ... I don't think he made it.

He produces a second flask from inside his jacket. He takes a swig, looking repeatedly between Billy and Christine.

MR. DILLON (CONT'D)

Who's next?

Mr. Dillon slumps over in his seat.

BILLY

Next? What do you mean?

MR. DILLON

Well, clearly there's a problem with the man upstairs. There's still a bad egg here, and I don't see this thing moving until, well..

Mr. Dillon gestures to the open door.

BILLY

No, I-I can't kill someone... I mean I was innocent and I got murdered-

CHRISTINE

Well, my ass is still making it to the top of this mountain, but it ain't gonna be with you.

Christine lunges at Billy. Billy reaches for Christine's coffee thermos and throws it in her face. The hot liquid sears her skin and eyes, blinding her. She screams and stumbles, eventually falling out of the doors. Billy watches her plummet into the forest. He is awestruck and horrified at what he has done.

Billy hears clapping from behind him. He turns around to see Mr. Dillon has taken his helmet off. A golden ring now hovers above his head. The gondola remains motionless. Mr. Dillon, murmurs a game show victory tune.

MR. DILLON

(Burps) Congratulations, William. You get to go to heaven.

BILLY

You're an angel?

MR. DILLON

Of sorts. I like to think of myself as more of a "spiritual guide".

BILLY

Well why do I get to go to heaven?
Why did I die? What is all of
this?

The beacon atop the mountain flashes gold in Mr. Dillon's eyes.

MR. DILLON

Everyone dies, William. Death is a needed service that God and heaven provide humans with. Granted, God outsourced most of the leg work of the afterlife operation to China, but goddamn it... we angels still take pride in our work. Clearly, I don't, but that's not the point. The point is William, I'm too fucked up to recall the exact reason why I'm letting you into heaven.

BILLY

What? That's bullshit!

MR. DILLON

Shut ya mouth and listen to me you cuck!

Mr. Dillon lights a cigarette.

MR. DILLON (CONT'D)

Maybe the awful truth is that: life's a real mess until you die and realize there's no true difference between heaven and hell. Once that sinks in, you'll curse every moment of real life you wasted behind a desk, or watching TV. But the reality is, I gotta take someone up this gondola every time anyway. Even the workers up *in heaven* have quotas to meet. Plus this job helps me pay for my timeshare up there. Damn, I gotta find a weekend to get there soon or else I'll piss through all my savings.

Billy clenches his fists as his face reddens with anger.

BILLY

So you mean to tell me I just
murdered someone for no reason? I
should kill *you* too you fat shit!

MR. DILLON

Listen William I'm on your side
here-

BILLY

On my side? You dosed me with
Acid!

Mr. Dillon stands up to reason with Billy.

MR. DILLON

Hey take it easy Buzz Killington,
I thought it would be fun-

BILLY

You know what? Fuck this, fuck
you, fuck everyone!

Billy punches Mr. Dillon in the face and kicks him out of
the open door. The gondola doors close and the car begins
to move. Billy chuckles.

BILLY

Great...

The car pulls into the peak station. The doors open to a
blinding white light. Billy rolls his eyes and steps out of
the car.

END.

