

CREMATORIUM - NORTH VANCOUVER

The DRIVER quickly walks out holding an urn and wearing a backpack.

DRIVER

(on phone)

I'll get her there, Madison. I'll get her there. Don't worry. I understand. Don't worry.

Get in car and places urn on passenger seat.

DRIVER

(hitting the steering wheel)

Fuck!

He composes himself and then calmly buckles himself and the urn in.

DRIVER

(to audience)

I promised my sister Madison I would get my mother's ashes to her wedding... in Toronto... in four days.

He starts the car and pulls out.

TRANSITION:

INT. CAR - LEAVING VANCOUVER - HEADING EAST ON HWY 1

DRIVER

(to audience)

I hate driving. Haven't driven for years. I think about using the HOV lane. Technically, there are two of us.

(to urn)

I visited you in the hospital.

(to audience)

Most people hate hospitals. They smell like life and death. Babies being born. People dying. Babies dying. People getting a new lease on life.

(to another car)

Choose a lane, asshole!

(to audience)

Who invented rush hour?

(to urn)

It took me a while to find you.

(to audience)

She was in a ward with two other people. One had a cough like a werewolf with a hair-ball and the other insisted that somebody "get the nurse" - even if the nurse was there.

(to another car)

It's a passing lane, idiot. You don't do the speed limit in a passing lane. Fuck.

(to audience)

I don't really know what happened.

(to urn)

At first I didn't think you recognized me.

(to audience)

But as she was dying... I think... just for a moment. It was nice.

(to another car)

Indicate asshole! Fuck.

(to audience)

I hit the button. Nobody came. I guess the nurses were busy. On my way out I went to the nurses station and told them something was wrong. I took her stuff for safe keeping.

(to urn)

I don't know why you had so much stuff.

(to audience)

People steal from hospitals all the time. I called Walter, my stepfather, on her phone to let him know she was dead. Understandably he was upset.

(to another car)

Choose a lane!

Honks horn aggressively.

TRANSITION:

DRIVING

Driving.

TRANSITION:

HEADING EAST ON HWY 1 - LATER

Traffic moving smoothly.

DRIVER

(to audience)

Do you know where ashes come from? I mean, aside from the obvious. Like, how they're made? Because you don't come out of the oven looking that way. They put you in a grinder called a "remulator". They even have different setting. You know - fine grind, medium grind, coarse grind. Like Starbucks. And before you're ground up the bits are called "cremains". Honest. I couldn't make this shit up.

(to urn)

You and Walter met at the local church didn't you?

(to audience)

He looked a bit like an unemployed Santa.

(to urn)

He was much older than you.

(to audience)

Twenty years plus older as recall. Their relationship was as passionate as a waterlogged cucumber. But he loved her.

(to urn)

And I believe you loved him.

(to audience)

Whatever that means. Did you know there's always a little bit of the person left over from the time before? When you're cremated. They get mixed in.

(to urn)

So, who's that man and/or woman in there with you?

(to audience)

I guess this way none of us have to spend eternity alone. I like to think of all the racists who have been cremated who are now "mixed race". That could be a problem because my understanding is heaven is a gated community and somewhat exclusive. They don't like darkies. Sorry. That was a bit crass. They also don't like gays and lesbians. Which I think, technically, is the same thing. And they don't like non-Protestant, non-Catholic, non-Mormon, non-Jew, non-Christian, non-Muslim, non-Hindu, non-Islam, non-religious, non-spiritual, agnostic, atheist or Buddhist. We're all God's children. And nature. You can fucking forget about worshipping nature. That's a definite no-no. There's nothing natural about God. Why do people think breast-feeding in public is obscene? What could be more natural? We've definitely fallen off track somewhere along the line.

(to urn)

Did you know that they put you in a cardboard box? Stupid question. You were there.

(to audience)

I wanted to get her a wooden one but...

(to urn)

Who puts a person in a fucking cardboard box?

(to audience)

They should have had DEAD PERSON stamped on the side with a bar code and best before due date or something. At the very least they should have put a recycle symbol on it.

(to urn)

You are, after all, biodegradable.

(to audience)

Did you know that you have to wait 48 hours before you can be cremated? I guess that's to make sure you're dead. Either way, for her, it's too late now.

(to urn)

Just think of it as a tan gone wrong. Just look at this asshole up ahead. Could he drive any slower? Stand by for the sonic boom. Asshole.

(to audience)

Have you ever been on the highway and there's a car in each lane doing the exact same speed? There's nobody else on the road for miles. But you can't get past these piss ass a-holes. It's like they planned it. Just to fucking piss you off. Choose a lane asshole! Anyways, waiting forty-eight hours gave Walter time to fly back from Toronto and get things in order. Actually, it was a little more than forty-eight hours because of Christmas. People were roasting chestnuts over an open fire instead of my Mom. As it turned out, Walter's flight was delayed because of bad weather. Lucky for us.

(to urn)

It wasn't rocket science to figure out where you were.

(to audience)

There's only so many crematoriums in the area.

(to urn)

Besides that Walter and you share the same e-mail.

(to audience)

That I was able to access through her phone.

(to urn)

So I knew exactly where and when Walter was going to pick you up.

(to audience)

He'd arranged everything by e-mail. I just snuck into the crematorium office at the appointed time and scooped her up. There wasn't exactly high security there. I made sure to wave at the security camera so Walter would know she was in good hands. Welcome to Alberta.

TRANSITION:

KILLS DEER

JUST OUTSIDE LAKE LOUISE, AB

DRIVER

(to urn)

Walter told me where to find you. Or maybe God did. Or maybe the people talking to God.

(to audience)

Have you ever noticed that since people started using cell phone people who pray out loud don't look so crazy? Even the crazy people don't look so crazy.

(to urn)

They prayed for you. They didn't tell God what was wrong but I heard Walter tell someone that you were in Lions Gate Hospital for chemo. You had cancer. Just in case you didn't know.

(to audience)

Ovarian cancer. Nasty. Anyways, Walter told this person that he had to fly out to Toronto to help Madison with her wedding . Father of the bride and all that shit. It had been in the works for years.

(to urn)

Way before you so rudely got cancer.

(to audience)

So what could they do? They would never get their deposits back. People were flying out for the wedding.

(to urn)

The plan was to have you come right out after your latest chemo.

(to audience)

Because what could be more fun than a long flight after chemotherapy?

(to urn)

Walter was very worried about leaving you.

(to audience)

At least that what he told this person.

(to urn)

He shouldn't have left. He knows that now.

(to audience)

But I promised Madison I would get dear Mother to the wedding. A promise is a promise. My God. Look at the sunrise.

Hits a deer.

DRIVER

Shit.

He STOPS the car.

DRIVER

(to audience)

I think I hit a deer. I did. Shit.

He pulls out a KNIFE and gets out of the car. SNOW. TRAFFIC.

He disappears from view for a time then returns and closes the door.

He is wiping blood off the knife.

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For full script contact me at me@johnmcgie.com.