

PLAUDIT JONES

A Pilot Script

Written by
Johnny B. Dunn

johnnybdunn@gmail.com
310-467-5139

PLAUDIT JONES: AWAKENING

TEASER

FADE IN

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A calm summer evening. Crickets CHIRP and cicada BUZZ. FIREFLIES bounce around the night air as if performing a ballet to the symphony of insects against the clear dark sky.

Manicured grass. TOMBSTONES of all shapes and sizes stand in line; headboards for those quietly sleeping.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly bright colored lights flash on the horizon. A distant mausoleum lights up like an over zealous discotheque. Thumping DANCE MUSIC silences the insects. The fireflies duck for cover in bushes lining the edge of the cemetery.

Three shadows of REVELERS race to a headstone covered in black taffeta. Their CACKLES and LAUGHS grow louder as they run up to the headstone.

RANDY DAVIS and BRIAN TRAINER are eighteen and dressed for clubbing. The third, their host, WADDELL ZIMMER, (28), Ichabob Crane, watches their faces as he leans down and pulls the drape off the tombstone.

A SMART PAD mounted on the front under the name, Myrtle Marie Jones. He touches the smart pad.

The screen lights up.

WADDELL

You wanted something spooky.

RANDY

What the hell? I expected a ghost not a smart pad.

BRIAN

Who's Myrtle Marie Jones?

Waddell lights a doobie and passes it around.

WADDELL

Plaudit put it in this morning.

Waddell pushes play and the recorded video message plays.

The screen fades into images of sunsets, mountain scapes, rivers, and other calming images of nature as MUSIC SWELLS and the logo for *Digi-tomb, digital headstones* appears.

Waddell watches the other Revelers react with wonder... is it the amazement of the new feature to the cemetery plot, or the actual pot they're smoking.

ON THE SCREEN: Images dissolve revealing different perspectives of rolling farmland and farm house.

Soothing MUSIC and NARRATION plays in the background.

PLAUDIT (V.O.)

Myrtle Marie grew up in a simple home with a simple life. She graduated high school in 1949 and married her sweetheart, Josh Jones. They had three beautiful children together; Rachel, Ernie, and Plaudit.

Still photos of a young Myrtle and Josh smiling move on the screen in Ken Burns style. Photos of a six year old Plaudit, Rachel at 4, and Ernie, one, stand with Myrtle and Josh. The photo dissolves into Myrtle and the three children.

PLAUDIT (V.O.)

Unfortunately, at age 28, Josh passed leaving Myrtle Marie alone to raise three young children. She did get help from her sister and brother.

Video clips of Sissy and Uncle Bud appear on the screen. Jump cuts to create a contrived narrative.

UNCLE BUD (ON SMART PAD)

Josh dying hit Myrtle Marie pretty hard. She never really was happy after that. Actually, there's not a time--

(jump cut)

Hard as nails. You gotta give her that. Her personality was like fingernails on--

(jump cut)

Roses. Josh always gave her roses.

AUNT SISSY (ON SCREEN)

She was a hard worker.

(jump cut)

(MORE)

AUNT SISSY (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)

She worked a double shift to make extra tips so she could buy ciga--

(jump cut)

Care for her children, even though she may not always have been around. She taught her children responsibility at a young age. She would send them down to the corner store to pick up her smokes.

(jump cut)

Always saying she's trying to teach them something. Sometimes difficult, but always my sister.

The video transitions to still images of Myrtle Marie at bowling alleys. She is dressed in a bowling league team shirt with a cigarette in her mouth.

Waddell reaches down and hits the pause button. The image of Myrtle freezes on the screen. All three are stoned.

RANDY

Wow. If she had a face-lift, you could make boots from the extra skin.

WADDELL

A five-pack a day smoker. I had to prepare her.

RANDY

Shut up!

BRIAN

My god, Randy, you didn't know he worked here? How do you think we pull off these raves?

RANDY

Shit, I don't know, Bri. Just figured Waddell climbed the fence.

Randy takes a big draw from the weed and passes it on. He holds the smoke in as long as he can. He falls to his knees and blows the smoke all over the tombstone.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Hey, lady. You want a hit?

The Reveler gets up laughing and leaning on the tombstone.

Without warning, they hear a disembodied COUGH. Waddell and the others pause and look around. They look at Myrtle Marie who sits frozen on the screen. They burst out LAUGHING.

DISEMBODIED VOICE
Hey, assholes! Off my grave.

BRIAN
Whoa, must be the "e".

BRIAN (CONT'D)
We definitely need booze!

The three race back to the rave.

Static fills the screen. POP. The screen flashes the image of a scowling MYRTLE MARIE JONES (68). Smoker voice with hair piled high and held up by hair spray.

Myrtle looks around and taps on the glass of the screen.

MYRTLE MARIE
Where the hell am I?

CUT TO BLACK:

ACT I

TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. JONES HOME - NIGHT

MUSIC plays, *Dust in the Wind*, by Kansas.

A new ranch style house in an upscale neighborhood. HAMMERING from inside the house.

INT. JONES HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Master Bedroom, a king sized bed. Opened wardrobe boxes are scattered throughout the room.

PLAUDIT JONES (40) with the beginnings of a middle aged tire around his belly sports salt and pepper hair. He's on the edge of a crisis with depression feeling like a hobby..

Plaudit affixes a picture of Myrtle Marie Jones to the newly hammered nail. It sits within a wall of friends and relatives staring at him. He steps back admiring his work.

LYNETTE JONES (38), once a high school cheerleader aspiring to relive her popularity within Tulsa Society, enters from the Master Bath in a robe while wiping cream off her face.

LYNETTE

Are you serious? Your mother will be watching us as we sleep and, you know, sex?

PLAUDIT

(under his breath)
As if we ever.

LYNETTE

I'm sorry. What was that?

PLAUDIT

Alexa, turn off the music.

The ECHO DEVICE lights up and the MUSIC stops.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

I said most of these people are dead. Where have the years gone?

LYNETTE

It's late. Go to bed.

Lynette pulls back the sheet and climbs into bed.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Are you going to church with me and the kids tomorrow?

PLAUDIT

I have work. I've got to pay for this new house we can't afford.

Lynette rolls her eyes, applies moisturizer.

LYNETTE

You agreed to move and get the kids in a better school. Is this about that stupid video?

PLAUDIT

It was installed this morning, thank you for asking. And, why are you going to church? You don't have a religious bone in your body. You go just to be seen.

LYNETTE

That's not true. I volunteer. Next week I'm heading up the pot luck.

PLAUDIT

Not exactly the soup kitchen downtown?

Lynette closes and SNAPS the lid on the moisturizer shut.

LYNETTE

The homeless can't afford funerals and plots.

PLAUDIT

That sounds like a cause.

LYNETTE

(deep breath)

How many from our church have sent business your way? I help them in their moment of need.

Lynette tosses the moisturizer on the night stand. Turns off her side lamp.

In the dark, Plaudit stares at the photos. The MOONLIGHT illuminates Myrtle's picture.

INT. JONES HOME HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Half empty boxes. Plaudit closes the Master Bedroom door. He sees a light coming from a cracked bedroom door.

INT. DREW'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DREW JONES (13), a book worm, sits at a desk. In his pajamas, he stares at a jar on his desk with a live grasshopper.

The door CREAKS open. Plaudit enters.

Drew remains focused on the glass jar.

PLAUDIT

Drew? What are you doing, son?

DREW

I hate it.

PLAUDIT

The grasshopper?

DREW

The school.

PLAUDIT

Wow. Two weeks. That enough time to make a true decision?

DREW

Even when they make you commit murder?

Plaudit surveys the grasshopper, a BOTTLE of alcohol and some COTTON BALLS. He connects the dots.

PLAUDIT

What happens if you don't?

DREW

I flunk science. I have a hit list Mrs. Roberts gave me of the insects I have to kill. If that wasn't enough, I stick pins in them like trophies.

PLAUDIT

Wow.

DREW

Exactly. I don't want to be a serial killer.

Plaudit sits on the edge of the bed.

PLAUDIT

Some people believe each soul has selected the hour and the place when he or she will transition from this world. A cotton ball soaked in alcohol dropped in the jar is simply the instruments used for its departure.

DREW

Do grasshoppers have souls?

PLAUDIT

I don't know. Maybe not.

DREW

I still feel guilty.

PLAUDIT

Complete her hit list and demand Mrs. Roberts give you an "A".

DREW

And what if they do?

PLAUDIT

Harriet Beecher Stowe said, "The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone."

Plaudit looks at Drew and then the grasshopper. As if a stroke of genius, he picks up the jar.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Mr. Grasshopper, my son Drew truly regrets what he must do in order to make an "A" in his class. But, I know he will honor you by giving you the best spot in his box.

(to Drew)

Would you like to provide some words you don't want unsaid?

Drew stands up and takes the jar.

DREW

I'm really sorry Mr. Grasshopper. I hope it is your time.

PLAUDIT

Okay. Let's go to sleep. You can give him the night and do what you need to do tomorrow.

Drew places the jar on the desk.

Drew climbs into bed. Plaudit shuts off the light.

INT. JONES HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit sneaks back into the master bedroom. As he walks by the wall of pictures, Myrtle Marie's picture slips and hangs at an angle. Plaudit stops and repositions the picture.

CUT TO:

EXT. TULSA, OKLAHOMA - DAY

The Art Deco buildings of downtown Tulsa. Plaudit drives a tired Toyota Prius.

ON THE RADIO: Another One Bites the Dust, by Queen.

CHURCHES on every corner packed with cars. Tree lined streets provide a nice canopy to South Tulsa.

EXT. ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

A sparsely populated area on the edge of town.

ROAD SIGN worn with rusted bullet holes, "Terrell's Funeral Home, Please, Drive Carefully. We Can Wait." Stands with a couple rusty bullet holes.

On one side of the road the EAST OF EDEN CEMETERY which spans the entire block. The other side a Quick Trip Gas Station and Convenient Store, an abandoned furniture mart, and near the end of the block, TERRELL'S FUNERAL HOME.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Plaudit drives glancing over at the cemetery with a sigh. It's another work day.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Plaudit enters the iron gated entrance to the cemetery. He pulls into Terrell's Funeral Home, a plain gray brick building with red awnings.

EXT. TERRELL'S FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

Plaudit parks in front of a sign hanging upside down by a nail on a short wood post, PLAUDIT JONES, SALES MANAGER.

Plaudit carrying a briefcase, unwraps a piece of gum and chews it as he approaches the sign.

Plaudit pulls out the wad of gum. He swings the sign up right and places the gum between the sign and post.

INT. TERRELL'S FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

Blue plush wall to wall carpet, brown paneling, a couple winged back chairs with a desk.

Plaudit enters. An old ceiling fan SQUEAKS as it turns.

LEATHA PARKER (54), sits at her desk. She's the funeral home's secretary, receptionist, and make-up artist of the dead. She files her nails and flips pages of a magazine. She doesn't look up.

LEATHA

Started squeaking Friday. I think it's on it's last leg. At least we won't have to bury it.

Leatha hands Plaudit a stack of phone messages.

LEATHA (CONT'D)

You hear the news this morning?

Plaudit scans his messages.

LEATHA (CONT'D)

Well, it appears someone filed a noise complaint last night. Seems there was a party going on in the cemetery, of all places.

Plaudit approaches his office door.

LEATHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

By the way, some customers are waiting for you in the showroom.

PLAUDIT
 Maybe next time lead with that?

CUT TO:

INT. ARRANGEMENT ROOM - LATER

Coffins of different colors and styles line the wall.

A grieving couple stand near the coffin holding each other. A FEMALE CUSTOMER (40) plain country folk, reaches into her bra and pulls out a Kleenex. The MALE CUSTOMER (41), a burly man.

Plaudit fluffs a pillow in one of the coffins as he speaks.

PLAUDIT
 We take care of everything from preparing the body, viewings, flowers, and grave-side. I don't know if you noticed, but we are right in the cemetery. We watch over your departed when you can't.

The Male Customer reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a folded piece of paper.

MALE CUSTOMER
 This is where her Aunt Pauline is waiting, Hillcrest Medical Center.

Leatha walks in.

PLAUDIT
 Don't worry. We'll take good care of Pauline. Leatha will write up the order for you. We offer financing if you have a need.

MALE CUSTOMER
 Highway robbery. Whatever happened to the old pine box?

The Female Customer CRIES and SOBS. Leatha grabs a box of Kleenex and comforts her.

Plaudit pulls the Male Customer aside.

PLAUDIT
 (whispering)
 I understand this can be expensive, but how much is your wife's ease of mind worth in this trying time?

The Male Customer squeezes his eyes shut and wipes tears.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)
 (caving in)
 Didn't we bury her grandmother here
 a couple years ago?

Plaudit turns toward the ladies.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)
 Leatha, write this up for our
 friends here...

Plaudit turns back to the Male Customer.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)
 ...and give them the family
 discount.

The Male Customer breaks down and moves to his wife. They embrace and comfort each other. Leatha approaches Plaudit.

LEATHA
 I'll take care of them. You need to
 go to your mother's grave.

PLAUDIT
 What's wrong?

LEATHA
 Teddy wants you over there.

PLAUDIT
 He came in on a Sunday?

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST OF EDEN CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit walks at a fast clip. He passes by a backhoe. MARKUS JOHNSON (30), grave digger and landscaper. He's an attractive catch if he would spend some time with the living.

He shuts off the motor.

MARKUS
 (ready to explode)
 You hear about the noise complaint?
 You should've seen what they did to
 my grass.

Plaudit doesn't stop and waves an acknowledgment to Markus.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
If I ever find out who--

Markus starts up the motor.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - CONTINUOUS

THEODORE TERRELL (35), dresses with style and has the attitude of an entrepreneur. He stands behind the headstone thumbs through messages on his phone.

Plaudit arrives out of breath.

PLAUDIT
Hey, Mr. T.

TEDDY
Why do we do this?

PLAUDIT
(thinking)
Someone has to.

Teddy CLICKS his phone off and pockets it.

TEDDY
You convince them to spend their money with us.

PLAUDIT
I like to think--

TEDDY
Do you have the tools you need to make that happen?

PLAUDIT
You've lost me.

Teddy rips off the black taffeta that covers the headstone.

TEDDY
The Digi-tomb. When people see this, they'll put all of their dead loved ones with us. They'll keep coming back, buying flowers, maybe popcorn and, introducing friends to this exciting new phenomenon.

Teddy reaches down.

PLAUDIT

Wait! Before you hit play, I gotta say this is just... It's not--

TEDDY

I know things were not always great between you and your mother.

PLAUDIT

Let's just say she wasn't the nicest person to anyone.

TEDDY

I'll say it. She was a bitch. But, I'm not the one to tell her story. You did. All it's gotta do is induce warm and fuzzy feelings.

PLAUDIT

This may be the hardest thing you have ever asked me to do.

Teddy slaps Plaudit on the back.

TEDDY

Just hit play for god's sake.

Plaudit kneels down and pushes play. The VIDEO PLAYS.

ON THE SCREEN: Soothing MUSIC and NARRATION plays over images of farmland and farmhouse.

PLAUDIT (V.O.)

Myrtle Marie grew up in a simple home with a simple life. She graduated high school in 1940 and married her sweetheart, Josh Jones.

In the middle of play, the screen is taken over by STATIC. Plaudit pushes buttons in a panic.

PLAUDIT

(sarcastic)

This is great.

Blinking message appears, "LOW BATTERY".

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

This was charged when I installed it. Someone's played with it.

TEDDY

Get it together, Jones. Or, I'll find someone who can.

Teddy storms off.

Plaudit continues to push buttons.

A VOICE comes over the black screen of the smart pad.

MYRTLE MARIE (V.O.)
My, god! That is god damn awful.

Plaudit, caught off guard, jumps up and takes a few steps back and looks around for anyone who might have said it.

MYRTLE MARIE (V.O.)
I mean, it could have been better.
It was a good try, Plaudit.

PLAUDIT
(frightened)
Oh, no, no, no...

STATIC and POPS. Myrtle Marie appears on the screen.

MYRTLE MARIE
Yes, I'm here. Jesus, what a
terrible place to be held up.

PLAUDIT
(wide eyed)
This isn't real.

MYRTLE MARIE
Of course it is. Don't have much
time. Takes juice to do this. You
gotta help--

The screen cuts to black.

PLAUDIT
Mom?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT I

ACT II

EXT. JONES HOME - DAY

Establishing...

INT. JONES HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The pitched roof of the house offers room to stand and move. Plaudit shuffles through a stack of boxes.

PLAUDIT

I know I just put you up here.
Where are...

Plaudit finds the box. He sits on the floor and flips it open. He sorts through various photographs of his mother Myrtle Marie, leaning over a six-year old Plaudit at a dining room table. Myrtle holds a birthday cake with a cigarette dangling from her lips. The next shows her lighting the six candles on the cake with her cigarette.

Another photograph shows Myrtle smoking with her sister Sissy and brother Bud. All three scowl at the camera. Then there's Plaudit's high school graduation picture with his cap and gown smiling. Myrtle stands beside him arms crossed and, of course, a cigarette in her mouth.

LYNETTE (O.S.)

Plaudit? Are you up there?

PLAUDIT

Yeah, It's me.

Lynette emerges from the open trap door in the floor.

LYNETTE

What are you doing up here? The kids are going to be late for school.

PLAUDIT

The video is god damn awful.

LYNETTE

That sounds like something your mother would say.

PLAUDIT

She's in my head, isn't she?

LYNETTE

Plaudit. She's gone. Let the baggage go.

PLAUDIT

I'm looking for pictures to add to the video. But, I can't seem to find anything flattering.

Lynette sits down and digs into the box. She pulls out a handful of pictures and sorts through them.

Lynette finds the picture of Myrtle, Sissy and Bud.

LYNETTE

Look at Uncle Bud Before he lost his legs to diabetes.

She finds another picture of Bud and Myrtle. She is giving him a box of candy with a bow on it.

Lynette discovers a picture of her in a cheerleader outfit lovingly leaning on Plaudit who wears a high school letter jacket. Both, young and happy. She shows it to Plaudit.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

What ever happened to these two?

Plaudit grabs the picture and smiles.

PLAUDIT

Tell the kids I'll be down in a minute.

Lynette returns downstairs from the attic.

Plaudit continues to look through pictures. He finds one where Myrtle is smiling. She sits in a hairdresser's chair in a beauty shop smoking with curlers in her hair.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Wow. Interesting, a happy day.

INT. CAR - DAY

ON THE RADIO: *She's Gone* by Hall and Oates

Plaudit drives.

KATIE JONES (15), cute and obsessed with her phone, thumbs through her texts. Drew sits in the back seat.

KATIE
 (adolescent angst)
 Where are we, the 80s? Dad, this
 music is so old. You're so old.

PLAUDIT
 I love you too, sweetie. We're
 almost to school.

EXT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit pulls to the front of the school. Katie darts out.
 Drew lingers.

PLAUDIT
 Okay, Drew. Time for school.

DREW
 What if today is my day? What if
 you come to pick me up and you
 discover I'm dead?

Plaudit SIGHS. He looks at his watch.

PLAUDIT
 You're not going to die today.
 Unless, you don't get out of this
 car. Now, go to school.

Drew, dejected, grabs his backpack and jar. He exits.

INT. PREPARATION ROOM - DAY

Waddell prepares a corpse on the embalming table in the
 center of the room. Shelves with supplies line the walls.

Leatha enters.

LEATHA
 Is that Pauline?

WADDELL
 Yes. She'll be ready for you later
 today. Did you bring your make-up?

LEATHA
 I always keep it in the trunk of my
 car. You never know when you're
 going to need it for an impromptu
 Mary Kay sales party.

WADDELL

Fine. You can let me work now.

LEATHA

It's a real shame there was an anonymous call complaining about the noise in the cemetery Saturday night. Good thing they didn't call Mr. T.

Waddell stops his work and looks up at Leatha. He rips off his latex gloves and walks around the table to her.

WADDELL

It was you.

Leatha smiles and walks over to his desk. She flips open an appointment book.

LEATHA

Do you have all of your raves scheduled on the calendar?

WADDELL

No one lives around here. Nobody is ever here on a Saturday night.

Waddell runs over to the table and grabs the calendar from Leatha's hands.

LEATHA

Except the ghouls.

WADDELL

What do you want?

LEATHA

I want a cut at the door. I'll even come and help you put them on.

WADDELL

Don't you have enough side businesses? Keep out of mine.

LEATHA

I'm generous. I'll only take 30%. And, I'll make sure Teddy and the police never hear of it.

WADDELL

Why are you doing this? You don't need the money.

LEATHA

Mary Kay sales aren't what they
used to be.

Leatha walks to the door.

LEATHA (CONT'D)

I'll see you Saturday night.

She exits.

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

The sun sets displaying vibrant color in the sky. Plaudit's Prius drives along the winding road and stops at a path.

Plaudit, Lynette, Katie and Drew exit the car. Plaudit and Lynette walk along a path. Katie and Drew follow a typical teenager distance from their parents.

They pass Markus digging a new grave.

PLAUDIT

Hey, Markus.

Markus stops digging, but doesn't respond, then back to it.

Drew stops and stares at the newly dug hole. Markus keeps working avoiding a possible conversation.

KATIE

(shouting)

Hey, Drew. Come on.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - LATER

The family watches the smart pad in mid play.

ON THE SCREEN: MUSIC plays. Still images of Myrtle Marie at bowling alleys. She is dressed in a bowling league team shirt with a cigarette in her mouth.

PLAUDIT (V.O.)

Myrtle Marie spent most of her free
time playing in a bowling league.

BOWLER (50), wears the same style bowling shirt.

BOWLER (ON SCREEN)

Ruthless, ruthless. No better way
to put it.

(MORE)

BOWLER (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)

She was about winning at all cost.
Great bowler. Most likely cheated.
She made you be your best.

The video ends with Myrtle smiling while sitting in a hairstylist chair at a salon.

PLAUDIT (V.O.)

Goodbye, Myrtle Marie Jones,
sister, mother, and grandmother.

Then, the picture fades as the MUSIC swells and ends.

The family stares at the screen.

LYNETTE

That's it?

PLAUDIT

Just watch. Best is yet to come.

DREW

It's like she's in a glass jar.

PLAUDIT

It's a smart pad. She really isn't
in there.

KATIE

Aren't you afraid some teenager
could rip it off and sell it for
drugs or something?

PLAUDIT

No, Katie.

(pause)

What do you mean some teenager?

LYNETTE

(patronizing)

Okay. We saw it. It's a nice job,
Plaudit. Now, it's getting dark.
Let's go out to eat. I heard the
Greenbacks are eating at the
country club tonight.

PLAUDIT

Their name is Baumbach.

Lynette and Katie head back to the car. Plaudit and Drew stay. Drew steps a little closer to his dad.

DREW

I'm thinking the video didn't leave anything unsaid.

Plaudit smiles and lovingly rubs his head.

PLAUDIT

Thank you, son. Go on back to the car. I'll be there in just a minute.

Drew leaves. Plaudit kneels down and moves his finger to the screen. Before he shuts the video off, he takes a moment.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

I did the best I could mom. I know you would have been proud.

Myrtle appears on the screen.

MYRTLE MARIE (ON SCREEN)

Hells bells. You're still on this stupid video?

PLAUDIT

God almighty!
(backs away)
Don't move!

Plaudit sprints back to the car.

MYRTLE MARIE (ON SCREEN)

Come back here. I need to talk!

EXT. PLAUDIT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Plaudit rushes up to the car and pounds on the passenger window startling everyone in the car.

PLAUDIT

Lynette, kids, you have to come and see this.

LYNETTE

We've already seen it.

PLAUDIT

Not this you haven't.

Lynette and the kids get out of the car. Plaudit hurries them down the path.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Myrtle Marie's hair salon picture is paused on the screen. Plaudit waits until they're all back.

PLAUDIT

Okay, mom. Say hello to the family.

They all stare at the still image. Nothing.

LYNETTE

(to Plaudit)

Are you feeling okay?

PLAUDIT

Just wait.

(to the smart pad)

Go head, mom. Tell them what you told me. Tell them you hate the video.

The still image of Myrtle fades and the screen goes black.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

No, no, no.

Plaudit jumps down to the pad and pushes buttons to get the smart pad back on.

LYNETTE

You must be having a blood sugar drop. I think you need to eat.

Lynette and the kids leave.

PLAUDIT

No. I swear. She was here.

Plaudit struggles to get it back on. He stops, stands and stares at the blank screen.

Plaudit leaves.

Myrtle Marie appears remorseful on the screen as she watches Plaudit walk down the path.

MYRTLE MARIE

God, I could use a cigarette.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT II

ACT III

INT. JONES HOME - MASTER BATHROOM - MORNING

Plaudit, hair still wet from a shower, brushes his teeth. Lost in his thoughts, he watches the water spiraling down the drain.

Lynette enters, lowers the lid, and sits on the toilet.

Plaudit, spits toothpaste in the sink. He, wipes his mouth as his attention focuses on a post-it note on his bathroom mirror. It reads: "TODAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET BETTER. DON'T WASTE IT!"

PLAUDIT

I could make it better. Maybe I need more footage.

LYNETTE

I need your focus for a minute. I'm concerned after last night.

PLAUDIT

Mr. T is coming back today. It's going to be a disaster.

LYNETTE

I didn't hate it. You're right. It's difficult to make your mother look like someone she's not.

PLAUDIT

(half-hearted)
Yeah.

LYNETTE

Should I be worried?

PLAUDIT

I was tired and hadn't slept much. I'll be fine.

Plaudit gives Lynette a forced reassuring grin.

LYNETTE

(reluctantly)
Okay.

Lynette jumps up and leaves.

Plaudit looks in the mirror upbeat and smiling. He practices.

PLAUDIT

Mr. T, Teddy, It's raw and real. I think that when someone sees this they're going to feel like the family built it themselves - like a home movie.

Plaudit's smile fades. He exhales a big SIGH and grabs antacid from the medicine cabinet.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Like a bad home movie.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - DAY

Plaudit and Teddy stand in front of the tombstone as the music fades and Myrtle's picture freezes on the screen.

Teddy starts to speak, then stops with a grunt.

PLAUDIT

(in full sales mode)

When someone sees this, they're going to feel like it was made by loved ones, not some big agency.

TEDDY

Like a home video.

PLAUDIT

Yes! We're on the same page.

TEDDY

Okay, I can see that. But, can you sell it?

PLAUDIT

I believe so. I think we can make it reasonable and ask the family to help us by providing all of the photographs and video.

TEDDY

That should give us a bigger margin since you'll be doing all the editing.

PLAUDIT

(surprised)

I'm what?

Teddy gives Plaudit a "don't give me shit" look.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

(playing along)

Of course, I'm doing the editing.
There is some down time between
customers.

(sarcastic)

I can always get in the habit of
working lunches.

TEDDY

That's the right attitude. We need
a name for our production company.

PLAUDIT

Production company?

TEDDY

It's a unique service offering of
the funeral home. We need a logo at
the beginning of each video.

PLAUDIT

Or at the end. That could be good,
less obtrusive.

TEDDY

Fine, fine. But, what's the name?

PLAUDIT

What about Teddy Terrell Pictures?

TEDDY

Something more edgy and exciting.
How about T-Rex Productions. You
could make the T-Rex roar like the
MGM lion.

PLAUDIT

It's edgy and exciting.

TEDDY

(dramatic)

Great. Let's sell some Digi-tombs
by T-Rex Productions!

Teddy leaves down the path. Plaudit moves closer to the
tombstone and kneels down and looks at Myrtle's picture.

PLAUDIT

I figured you would have had
something smart to say after
hearing that conversation.

(pause)

Yeah, didn't think so.

(MORE)

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

You've been gone a year and I still
hear you criticizing me in my head.

Plaudit turns off the smart pad and leaves. STATIC and POP!
He stops and turns back to the tombstone. The frozen image of
Myrtle is up on the screen.

Plaudit turns the smart pad off, once again. Within seconds,
STATIC and POP!

Plaudit turns the smart pad off and a message appears on the
screen, "LOW BATTERY" then, it fades to "BITE ME". He pulls
it off the tombstone.

INT. PLAUDIT'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Plaudit plays with animation software on his computer. He's
attempting to build a roaring T-Rex.

Leatha steps into his doorway.

LEATHA

There's a priest in the arrangement
room.

PLAUDIT

What are your thoughts about this
whole Digi-tomb product?

LEATHA

I like it. You know, my father
split when I was ten. We
reconnected again about five years
back. Then he disappeared, again.

PLAUDIT

Must've been very sad to get your
dad back only to lose him?

LEATHA

Some people may not get one of
those smart pads on a tomb cause
they don't know enough.

Plaudit agrees with a nod. He gives Leatha a comforting tap
on her arm as he passes.

PLAUDIT

I need to see a priest.

INT. ARRANGEMENT ROOM - LATER

Plaudit moves over to the coffin with the lowest price tag. Father Francis (28), attractive and athletic, follows Plaudit to the coffin.

PLAUDIT

This is the cheapest we have. Are you sure you won't consider cremation?

FATHER FRANCIS

In 1963 the church lifted the ban. But, The Church requires that the deceased be treated with prayerful reverence.

PLAUDIT

That was right out of the handbook.

FATHER FRANCIS

Sometimes if I have different opinions, it's better to just recite the...

(using air quotes)
Handbook.

PLAUDIT

Our crematory is not a basement furnace. We treat the body with dignity and respect.

FATHER FRANCIS

I believe you. However, our congregation has decided on burial. They're paying for it.

(playful)
Just not too much.

PLAUDIT

They decided?

FATHER FRANCIS

The man was homeless. He attended our soup kitchen and our church. He had been coming about eight years.

PLAUDIT

I'm assuming you'll have the ceremony at the church?

FATHER FRANCIS

No one really knew him.

PLAUDIT

Sad.

FATHER FRANCIS

I'll speak at the grave side.

Francis approaches a cheap, yet elegant coffin.

FATHER FRANCIS (CONT'D)

We'll take this one. I think
Christopher would have liked it.
Not too flashy, practical.

PLAUDIT

Of course. I'll have Leatha write
it up for you.

Plaudit and Father Francis shake hands. Then, Plaudit is
stricken with an idea.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Would you like to see something?

Father Francis hesitates.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

I'm not trying to sell you
something. It's just... I think you
will appreciate it.

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit and Father Francis walk along a road flanked with
graves on each side. Plaudit holds the newly charged smart
pad next to his chest as he walks.

FATHER FRANCIS

You really do take your job
seriously. That's reassuring. You
have regrets for not saying
something to someone you lost?

PLAUDIT

Not that she would want to hear
what I have to say.

FATHER FRANCIS

Never leave anything unsaid or
done. It might be too late.

Up ahead, Markus plants lavender around a tree.

PLAUDIT

Exactly. I only wish I was in the
business of life, not death.

FATHER FRANCIS

And you are. Think about how you
impact the lives of the loved ones.

PLAUDIT

I suppose I do.

They approach the tree and Markus. Father Francis stops.

FATHER FRANCIS

(to Markus)

Lavender is my favorite.

Markus smiles. He stands up and takes off his work gloves
while avoiding eye contact.

MARKUS

Yes, and an insect repellent for
the people who visit.

FATHER FRANCIS

That's very thoughtful of you.

(sticks out his hand)

I'm Father Francis. Call me Frank.

Uncomfortable and awkward, Markus reaches his hand out and
shakes Father Francis' hand.

MARKUS

Markus.

An uncomfortable silence. Markus returns to work.

PLAUDIT

(walks off)

This way, Father.

Plaudit and Father Francis continue down the road. Markus
watches as they leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - LATER

ON THE SCREEN: Video concludes with the still of Myrtle
smiling in the hair salon.

PLAUDIT (V.O.)
Goodbye, Myrtle Marie Jones,
sister, mother, and grandmother.

Video FADES TO BLACK as the MUSIC swells, then ends.

PLAUDIT
I don't think it's for everybody,
but some families may enjoy coming
on a Sunday or holiday and
reconnecting with loved ones
through the video.

FATHER FRANCIS
What will people think of next? I
think it's a fine piece of work.

PLAUDIT
(happy)
Thank you, Father. Your homeless
friend's story, I would be happy to
do it for free. Then, your
congregation can come and learn
about Christopher.

FATHER FRANCIS
I believe they would like that.

PLAUDIT
Father, I was wondering if I could
ask you a really bizarre question?

FATHER FRANCIS
I promise not to judge.

PLAUDIT
Do you believe spirits can
communicate with you from beyond
the grave?

FATHER FRANCIS
I do. I believe there are times
when spirits help us by giving us
warnings and guidance. I also
believe they communicate because
they have some unfinished business
before they can move on.

PLAUDIT
Can they ever get trapped in
something?

FATHER FRANCIS
 Attachments? Now you're going into
 territory that I don't know
 anything about.

PLAUDIT
 Thanks. I thought I would ask.

FATHER FRANCIS
 I should be getting back to church.
 I need to lead six o'clock mass.

Plaudit looks at his watch.

PLAUDIT
 I had no idea it was so late. Can
 you find your way back?

Father Francis nods and smiles as he leaves.

Plaudit sits on the grass in front of the tombstone. He turns
 the video on. It plays from the beginning...

CUT TO:

INT. VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A coffin sits at the front of the room. A table filled with
 Mary Kay cosmetics are on display.

Leatha BRUSHES rouge on Pauline's cheeks while five ladies
 stand around the coffin watching Leatha apply make-up.

LEATHA
 Now ladies, I have been your beauty
 consultant for years. I would not
 steer you wrong.

She picks up an eye brush and compact.

LEATHA (CONT'D)
 I'm using the limited-edition Fall
 Color Collection. It's the rose
 nudes palette. This luxurious eye
 color palette lets you move from a
 subtle smoky daytime look to a
 dramatic evening effect.

She applies the eye color to Pauline's eyes.

BARBARA JEAN (31) approaches the coffin.

BARBARA JEAN

Are you able to get these palettes online?

LEATHA

Only available exclusively from a beauty consultant. I do have several on the table, just in case.

BARBARA JEAN

Is it hypo-allergenic?

LEATHA

I haven't seen a bad reaction.

SUSIE (45) matter of fact and no nonsense.

SUSIE

I hope not. She's dead.

The women CHUCKLE.

LEATHA

(glaring at Susie)
On my other clients.

Leatha steps back and looks at her masterpiece.

SUSIE

Why not give her the illusion of full cleavage. I use--

LEATHA

She's someone's aunt, not mistress.

SUSIE

You never really know, do you?

LEATHA

(adamant)
I believe Pauline is ready for evening visitors.

APPLAUSE from all the women, except Susie.

LEATHA (CONT'D)

Now, let's start buying some merchandise. Momma's gotta eat.

CUT TO:

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - CONTINUOUS

The video ends.

Plaudit reaches for the play button.

MYRTLE MARIE (V.O.)
Oh, god. Not again. Aren't you
tired of it yet?

Plaudit slowly pulls his hand back.

PLAUDIT
I'm not crazy. You are attached to
that thing.

Myrtle appears on the screen.

MYRTLE MARIE
To the cemetery, not that smart
gadget thing.

PLAUDIT
Smart pad. Why do you show up
sometimes and not others? I looked
crazy when my family--

MYRTLE MARIE
You couldn't bury me with a pack of
Chesterfield Kings?

PLAUDIT
Why are you here? Shouldn't you be,
I don't know, somewhere else?

MYRTLE MARIE
Where would you have me go? Hell?
You think I should be in hell?

PLAUDIT
I didn't say that. But, you are
obviously not in heaven.

MYRTLE MARIE
Obviously, or that whole heaven
thing was one big joke. Like the
fact I can't seem to go past the
boundaries of this place.

PLAUDIT
You said you needed my help.

MYRTLE MARIE

I need juice. I feed off the battery in order to do this.

PLAUDIT

I suppose that makes sense.

MYRTLE MARIE

And don't make me talk to anyone. No need to start a circus. And you know your boss would pitch a tent over my grave and sell tickets.

Plaudit gets up and looks around the area.

PLAUDIT

I'm going to need a power source.

MYRTLE MARIE

Just about gone. Don't screw this up, Bug. Can't afford for you to over juice and blow it up.

PLAUDIT

I'm actually capable, mom.

MYRTLE MARIE

Why don't you ask Markus to help you. He can run electrical.

PLAUDIT

How do you know Markus?

MYRTLE MARIE

Everyone knows Markus.

PLAUDIT

So, what's it like?

MYRTLE MARIE

Sorry, son. I'm fading. Get me some juice! And some cigarettes...

She COUGHS and HACKS. Her image fades as the screen goes black with a CRACKLE and POP!

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

EXT. CEMETERY - DAWN

MUSIC: *Morning has broken*, by Cat Stevens

Light barely breaks in the east with a sky full of stars.

CAR LIGHTS appear and creep to the iron gates of the cemetery. The headlights illuminate the chain on the gate.

INT. PLAUDIT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

ON THE RADIO: The MUSIC continues to play

Plaudit pulls his hoodie over his head and tightens the strings around his face. He slips on gloves.

EXT. PLAUDIT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The engine idles.

Plaudit exits and approaches the gate. The lock slides open and Plaudit pushes the gates open.

INT. CEMETERY - LATER

Plaudit carries a large coil of outdoor orange extension cord. As he sneaks through the cemetery, he DROPS the cord along the fence line carefully to hide it in the grass.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit lays the extension cord from the fence to the back of Myrtle's tombstone. He pulls an adapter from his hoodie pocket and prepares to connect it to the extension cord.

PLAUDIT

Momma, you asked for juice.

Plaudit plugs the smart pad in. He waits.

STATIC fills the screen and Myrtle appears.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Thank, god.

MYRTLE MARIE

(agitated)

You sure can. That's the reason why I'm stuck here and can't crossover.

PLAUDIT

I don't understand.

MYRTLE MARIE

Keep up with the program, Bug.

PLAUDIT

Don't call me Bug. You know I don't like it.

MYRTLE MARIE

It appears I'm stuck here until I complete enough good deeds to compensate for all my bad.

PLAUDIT

That could take years.

MYRTLE MARIE

Smart ass.

PLAUDIT

How are you suppose to do that when you're dead?

MYRTLE MARIE

You're going to help me.

Plaudit turns his back to her.

MYRTLE MARIE (CONT'D)

(fake sincerity)

Look really dapper in that hoodie.

PLAUDIT

(turns back to her)

Are you kidding me? After only getting grief from you my whole life? I don't think so.

MYRTLE MARIE

What did I do that was so awful?

PLAUDIT

Bug for instance.

MYRTLE MARIE

That was just a nickname.

PLAUDIT

You told me I was weak and that in life, everyone was going to squash me like a bug.

MYRTLE MARIE

I was only trying to help you. Teach you to stand up for yourself.

PLAUDIT

Well, I'm doing it now.

Plaudit reaches for the power cord.

MYRTLE MARIE

Plaudit Jones. Don't you dare!

Plaudit PULLS the plug.

He leans against the tombstone and fights back tears.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. JONES HOME - LATER THAT MORNING

The sun shines on the house. Plaudit's CAR sits in the drive.

INT. DREW'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Drew in bed stares at the ceiling.

Plaudit enters. Drew brings the covers over his head.

PLAUDIT

Your mom says you're not feeling well. This wouldn't happen to have anything to do with Mr. Grasshopper, would it?

DREW

I let him go.

PLAUDIT

Good for you.

DREW

I thought you would be mad?

PLAUDIT

It's okay to stand up for your beliefs as long as it doesn't do harm to anyone else.

(MORE)

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

You go in and tell Mrs. Roberts that you are a conscientious objector, and want an alternative assignment.

DREW

What's a conscious objection?

PLAUDIT

A conscientious objector is someone who wouldn't do something on the grounds of conscience or religion.

DREW

So, what do I do?

PLAUDIT

Stand up for beliefs. Let her know you are open to doing something different for the grade. That will go a long way.

DREW

Whatever it takes.

PLAUDIT

Can you get ready for school?

DREW

Yeah, I guess, dad.

Plaudit smiles from his success.

PLAUDIT

(to himself)

That's how you do it, mom.

INT. ARRANGEMENT ROOM - DAY

Leatha stacks BROCHURES on a small table. A standing PLACARD promotes the new Digi-tombs.

Plaudit enters carrying a small PLASTIC BOX.

PLAUDIT

I found the push pins for the posters. I think just a couple on the walls is sufficient. The real sell comes at the tombstone.

Waddell charges in wearing his embalming apron and gloves.

WADDELL

(angry)

Plaudit, what the hell? You have a homeless man brought in who's filthy and stinks to high heaven.

PLAUDIT

Yes, he's a client.

WADDELL

We're now picking up dead bodies off the street? I can't believe the hospital would send him like this.

PLAUDIT

I'll call them.

LEATHA

Waddell, what is this really about?

WADDELL

I have one on the table, they bring in this homeless guy--

PLAUDIT

Christopher.

WADDELL

Christopher, and I have an eighteen year old in the cooler and I don't know if I can...

Waddell chokes up.

WADDELL (CONT'D)

You know? Never mind.

Waddell charges out of the room.

LEATHA

What the hell was that all about?

PLAUDIT

I'll go talk to him.

CUT TO:

INT. COOLER - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit enters.

He notices CHRISTOPHER on a rolling table under a sheet. He's dirty with long hair and full beard. Jesus like.

Plaudit approaches a second table. Randy, Waddell's friend from the rave, lies naked under a sheet.

On his chest is PAPERWORK. Plaudit reads.

PLAUDIT
Randy Davis, eighteen...
(pause)
Suicide--

WADDELL (O.S.)
That's bullshit!

Plaudit finds Waddell sitting on the floor in a corner.

WADDELL (CONT'D)
Randy would never kill himself.

PLAUDIT
(reading the paperwork)
Drug overdose. It could be a mistake.

WADDELL
Damn right. If he were here, he could tell us.

PLAUDIT
You realize that if he could tell us, then he wouldn't--
(stops himself)
How did he show up here? I haven't talked with his parents.

WADDELL
A friend. We hung out on the weekends. He's a good kid.

Waddell stands and walks to the body. He leans on the table.

PLAUDIT
I'll reach out to his parents, if you want.

WADDELL
Yeah, thanks.
(heavy sigh)
I need to deal with this.

Plaudit hands the paperwork to Waddell and leaves.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER THAT DAY

Plaudit walks deep in thought. He stops at a headstone.

PLAUDIT

Tell me, Mr.--

(reads tombstone)

Poplawski, born 1923 and died 1978,
Are you still here? Stuck, looking
for some kind of redemption?

Plaudit walks and stops at another tombstone.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

How abut you, Bertha?

The RUFFLE of wax paper leads him to a tree. Markus sits eating his brown bag lunch. Plaudit sits next to him.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Hey, Markus.

MARKUS

Isn't it beautiful? The rolling
grass. They're all out there
quietly sleeping.

PLAUDIT

If only...

(pondering)

Think some of them have regrets?

MARKUS

We all have regrets.

Markus offers part of his sandwich and Plaudit eats it.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

It's how we deal with them. We can
either do it now, or put it off and
seek redemption later.

PLAUDIT

What's our role in all that?

MARKUS

We help, so we don't have regrets.

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - LATER

Plaudit plugs in the smart pad. The screen glows.

The back of Myrtle's head appears on the screen.

PLAUDIT

Very mature.

MYRTLE MARIE (ON SCREEN)

You're the one who pulled the plug.

PLAUDIT

I'm here to make a bargain. I'm willing to help you do good so you can crossover with two conditions.

Myrtle turns around and faces Plaudit.

MYRTLE MARIE

What are they?

PLAUDIT

First, be nice to me. You've got a lot of making up to do.

MYRTLE MARIE

Fine. There were only good intentions--

PLAUDIT

Second, occasionally, you help me find out things from your side.

MYRTLE MARIE

I can live with that. Keep in mind, I'm limited to what's here.

PLAUDIT

What's that suppose to mean?

MYRTLE MARIE

It means, I can only talk to people who are in this cemetery. I can't step foot out of this place. At least for now.

PLAUDIT

Fair enough. Need you to find out what happened to Randy Davis.

MYRTLE MARIE

Is he in the ground?

PLAUDIT

No. Waddell is prepping him.

MYRTLE MARIE

I can't help you until he's in the ground. When he is, I'll see if I can catch him before he moves on.

PLAUDIT

Have all of the others moved on?

MYRTLE MARIE

Lordy, no. There's several of us here waiting on one thing or another. A few of us have started up a bridge game.

PLAUDIT

I'm glad to hear your not bored.

MYRTLE MARIE

Hell, yes I am. Now if we had a bowling alley down here, that would be a very different situation.

PLAUDIT

Okay. That's it for now.

Plaudit reaches for the power button.

MYRTLE MARIE

(stern)

Whoa, hold your horses. You're not going to unplug me again.

PLAUDIT

Just off.

MYRTLE MARIE

Wait. What about quid pro--

Plaudit hits the power button and Myrtle vanishes.

INT. CEMETERY - DAY

An open grave. A coffin sits at the bottom. Father Francis holds a bible and stands at one end of the grave. Plaudit wears a black suit and stands beside the grave.

Behind a pile of dirt, Markus stands, head bowed.

FATHER FRANCIS

(in mid reading)

A highway will be there, called the holy way;

(MORE)

FATHER FRANCIS (CONT'D)

no one unclean may pass over it,
but it will be for his people; no
traveler, not even fools, shall go
astray on it. They enter Zion with
joy, sorrow and mourning flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

PLAUDIT

Amen

MARKUS

Amen

Father Frances closes his bible.

FATHER FRANCIS

I would really like to thank you
both for being here.

Plaudit acknowledges with a smile. Markus grabs a shovel.

Father Francis takes off his coat and lays it with his bible
on the backhoe. He rolls up his sleeves.

FATHER FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Markus, I would like to do this.

Markus holds tight to the shovel.

FATHER FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Please.

Markus releases the shovel and walks behind the backhoe and
returns with a shovel. They both toss dirt onto the coffin.

Plaudit slips away as the men continue to work.

INT. TERRELL'S FUNERAL HOME - LATER

Leatha types at her desk.

Plaudit enters.

LEATHA

How was the grave-side service? Did
anyone from the parish show up?

PLAUDIT

It was fine. I guess they believe
they did all they had to do by
paying for the funeral.

(MORE)

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

It was just me, Father Francis, and Markus. Do you have the schedule?

LEATHA

What do you need to know?

PLAUDIT

Randy Davis' funeral this week?

LEATHA

Today. Started fifteen minutes ago.

PLAUDIT

(panicked)
What?

Plaudit charges for the front door.

LEATHA

If you see Markus, get him over there. He'll need to fill'er in as soon as he's done with Christopher.

CUT TO:

EXT. MYRTLE MARIE'S GRAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit scrambles to get to the tombstone and power up the smart pad.

PLAUDIT

Come on, come on.

The smart pad lights up. The MUSIC starts. The video is playing.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Oh, no. Mom? Can you hear me?

MARKUS (O.S.)

I don't think she can.

Plaudit screams and turns around. Markus stands over him.

PLAUDIT

Oh, dear god. You scared the piss out of me.

Plaudit hits the pause button on the smart pad.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Been to the Davis grave side yet?

MARKUS

The family is still over there. I should git. Gotta be done by now.

PLAUDIT

Sure. Yes. You need to be there.

Markus walks away.

Plaudit hits PLAY.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

Come on, mom!

The screen turns to STATIC and POPS! Myrtle appears on the screen in a cloud of cigarette smoke waving her hands.

MYRTLE MARIE

(coughing)

You know I'm not going to show myself when there is anyone else around. What's so urgent anyway?

PLAUDIT

They're wrapping up the Randy Davis funeral right now. Get over there and talk with him before he leaves this earth.

MYRTLE MARIE

Alright.

Myrtle doesn't leave she stares at Plaudit.

PLAUDIT

What? Why haven't you left?

MYRTLE MARIE

Go ahead and say it. I taught you better than that.

PLAUDIT

(angry)

Please!

MYRTLE MARIE

That's better.

She disappears.

PLAUDIT

(to himself)

You didn't teach me that.

Myrtle appears again.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

MYRTLE MARIE

Nothing. The dead have a different sense of time. What feels normal to us feels really fast for you.

PLAUDIT

What did you find out?

MYRTLE MARIE

His coach was feeding him illegal oxy. Says he's not the only one.

PLAUDIT

Stupid kids.

MYRTLE MARIE

He was a football kid and had a couple bad breaks with his collar bone, blew his knee, and suffered with migraines.

PLAUDIT

Someone has to stop him.

MYRTLE MARIE

You get right on that. I need a win to get me started.

Plaudit let's the news sink in and goes inside his head.

MYRTLE MARIE (CONT'D)

Also, this homeless guy? He's not going anywhere. I'll find out why.

PLAUDIT

This is all too much.

MYRTLE MARIE

You're a messenger for the dead. Like a medium, but you're not.

PLAUDIT

Yeah, this is harder to explain.

MYRTLE MARIE

Call in an anonymous tip. I got this bowling buddy on the force.

PLAUDIT
What's his name?

The smart pad goes black and Myrtle is gone.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)
No, no, no.

Plaudit checks the connection. All appears good. He traces the extension cord.

INT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Plaudit follows the cord to the outlet. Holding the unplugged cord is HARROLD DAVIS, Randy Davis' father.

PLAUDIT
Mr. Davis? I'm sorry for your loss, sir. How was the service?

MARKUS
Mr. Davis works for the City of Tulsa Code Enforcement.

HARROLD DAVIS
This is a violation.

PLAUDIT
Yes, Mr. Davis. We are trying out a new tombstone. Maybe you'd like--

HARROLD DAVIS
I just buried my son.

Harrold gives Plaudit a cold stare.

PLAUDIT
(off Harrold's look)
Maybe now isn't the time. Anyway, this new Digi-tomb requires power. The batteries--

HARROLD DAVIS
I really don't give a rat's ass.

Harrold hands the cord to Plaudit and leaves.

MARKUS
I'll get a line laid for you.

Plaudit is deep in thought. Markus walks away.

PLAUDIT
(yelling)
Thank you!
(under his breath)
Sooner would be better.

CUT TO:

INT. PLAUDIT'S OFFICE - EVENING

Plaudit stares out his office window as the sun sets. He's mindlessly flipping a pen.

Plaudit turns around to find Waddell standing in his doorway.

PLAUDIT
I have some news. It seems he was mixing drugs and took too much oxy.

WADDELL
Randy didn't have a prescription for oxy. He tried to get one--

PLAUDIT
Don't ask me how I know, but it appears the coach is passing them out like candy.

WADDELL
That son of a bitch.

PLAUDIT
I'm going to reach out to a friend of my mother's with the police. I'll let you know what happens.

Waddell gives an affirmative nod and leaves.

Plaudit opens his desk drawer and pulls out a calendar. He makes a check mark on today's date.

PLAUDIT (CONT'D)
That's one, momma.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF SHOW