

UNDERTAKERS  
EPISODE 2  
'THE OLD SWITCHEROO'

by

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## "UNDERTAKERS - EPISODE 2 - 'THE OLD SWITCHEROO'"

FADE IN:

EXT. MANSION - DAY

RICKY and JIMMY pull up in their BLACK VAN into the grounds of a large estate. A POLICE CAR is waiting by the entrance.

INT. BLACK VAN - DAY

RICKY

Now Jimmy, these people have money  
so no mess-ups this time, okay?

Jimmy is too busy gawping at the beautiful façade and driveway to answer. Ricky's face is white and he's sweating. He heaves but catches himself just in time.

RICKY

Oh, that curry was definitely off.  
I wish Lily wouldn't refreeze my  
leftovers.

Two police men, CONSTABLE DRAKE and CONSTABLE WOODS, step out of their car to meet them.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO MANSION - DAY

Const. Drake holds a set of keys.

CONST. DRAKE

The wife's still sunning herself in  
Spain. Won't be back until tonight.

CONST. WOODS

He was lying there all week. The  
housekeeper thought he was just  
sleeping in.

INT. MANSION - DAY

Jimmy is awed by the splendour: chandeliers, oil paintings - the works. Ricky wipes away the sweat on his hot brow. A YAPPY BARK follows a small DOG as it runs down the twisting staircase. Jimmy bends down to pick it up.

JIMMY

And who are you, little doggy?

The dog begins to LAP JIMMY'S FACE making him laugh. Const. Drake looks at Const. Woods with a smirk.

CONST. DRAKE  
That's Tiger.

CONST. WOODS  
Yeah, he's a real man-eater.

Jimmy lifts Tiger to LICK RICKY'S FACE. Ricky pushes them away in disgust. They all mount the stairs.

UPSTAIRS

A long landing is filled with further wealth. Ricky whispers to Jimmy who is still holding Tiger.

RICKY  
They're more loaded than I thought.  
(to Const. Drake)  
So where's the housekeeper?

CONST. DRAKE  
Probably getting counselling.

RICKY  
We're the only ones here?

CONST. WOODS  
Yeah.

JIMMY  
Then who's looking after Tiger?

The policemen chuckle to themselves.

CONST. DRAKE  
You could say it's been Mr Hunt.

RICKY  
The dead man?

CONST. WOODS  
He's been feeding him too.

Tiger struggles to get free and runs into the --

BEDROOM

Ricky stops at the foot of the KING SIZE BED. There is no sign of a corpse. The sound of CHEWING and GROWLING can be heard.

RICKY  
Where's the body?

Const. Drake nods to the other side of the bed. As Ricky steps round Drake says --

CONST. DRAKE  
He lay there for five days. Lucky  
Tiger was here to keep him company.  
Only problem was Tiger had nothing  
to eat ...

Ricky looks down. On the carpet --

MR HUNT'S HALF-EATEN CORPSE

Stares back. A bare skeleton of feet and legs sprouts from under his nightgown (no blood or gore). Tiger has his jaws gripped onto his dead owner's HAND, shaking it like a doll.

Ricky covers his mouth and runs into the EN-SUITE to be sick.

CONST. WOODS  
Thankfully Tiger could drink from  
the toilet to get rid of the taste.

Ricky can be heard HURLING up last night's curry. Tiger sees Jimmy and runs to be lifted. He licks his face as Jimmy laughs.

JIMMY  
Hey Ricky, can we keep him?

CUT TO:

TITLE CREDIT IN BLACK

"UNDERTAKERS  
'THE OLD SWITCHEROO'"

The 'S' of 'Undertakers' topples to swing like a broken hinge.

FADE TO:

INT. CRENSHAW'S HOME - DAY

Recently widowed IAN CRENSHAW navigates his wife's COFFIN held by BILLY and MIKE. It bumps into a table toppling a chair.

CRENSHAW  
Careful, it's oak!

BILLY  
Sorry.

They stumble through the house towards the STUDY room. Billy is wheezing as they reach the door.

BILLY  
Put it down, Mike.

Crenshaw checks his watch as the coffin is set on the floor.

CRENSHAW  
I need to pick up Aunt Rose. Now  
the Wake is at six - you'll be gone  
by then?

BILLY  
Everything will be sorted, Mr  
Crenshaw. You can rely on us.

Crenshaw gives a suspicious look before lifting his jacket.

CRENSHAW  
Just make sure you don't break  
anything else.

He exits. Mike sits on the coffin and rolls up a cigarette. Billy looks into the study.

MIKE  
Uptight prick. Don't sweat the  
small stuff, eh, Billy?

BILLY  
We might have a problem, Mike. I  
don't think it's going to fit.

Mike joins him. He measures the angles with his hands.

MIKE  
Sure it will. Come on.

They heave up the coffin and align it with the doorway. It barely squeezes past. Halfway into the study Mike's back presses against the wall.

MIKE

Whoa there! It's not going.

BILLY

I told you it wouldn't.

They bring the coffin back out. Billy wipes the sweat from his goggle-glasses. Mike is struck by inspiration.

MIKE

What if we tilt it? You know, like a sofa. Twist it in. It's only chipboard and oak veneer.

BILLY

I don't know, Mike.

MIKE

(raises right hand)

I promise to be careful. I helped my cousin move out last year. Didn't leave a mark.

Somewhat reassured, Billy moves to the front this time and they lift. The coffin is brought halfway in again.

MIKE

I'm going to raise it, you swivel.

BILLY (O.S.)

Wait! What about the body?

MIKE

She'll be fine. I prepped her myself. Stiff as a board. So, on three. One. Two. Three!

Mike shoulders the coffin up then presses it high. The lid SCRAPES the door frame.

INTERCUT:

STUDY

BILLY

(freezes)

What was that?

MIKE (O.S.)

Nothing to worry about. Can you swivel it?

Billy tries to swivel the coffin, twisting and dragging it. The CARPET starts to rise into a RIDGE but goes unnoticed. The coffin BANGS repeatedly off the door frame.

MIKE (O.S.)

Nearly there, Billy. Keep going.

Bang, bang, bang - the lid clatters with each jerk. The carpet ridge grows bigger like a tsunami.

INTERCUT:

MIKE

One big push, okay?

Mike shoves forward. There's a --

LOUD RIP

And Mike stops in his tracks.

MIKE

What was that?

INTERCUT:

Billy clasps his hands over his mouth as he gapes at the --

MASSIVE RIP

In the carpet.

BILLY

Oh balls!

INTERCUT:

Unbeknown to Mike, Crenshaw has returned to fetch his keys.

CRENSHAW

(shouts)

What in the hell!

Mike jumps and lets go. The --

COFFIN CRASHES

To the floor with the unmistakable THUD of the body inside. Crenshaw is furious.

MIKE  
(shrugs)  
At least we got her in.

INT. BASHAMS' OFFICE - DAY

MRS BASHAM sits in her wheelchair opposite a travelling SALESMAN with WINNIE in the background. He sets a large BRIEFCASE on the table as Mrs Basham's eyes bore into him.

SALESMAN  
Give me ten minutes of your time, ma'am, and I will make the job of funeral director more pleasurable.

He unlatches the briefcase and pulls out a SATIN BAG and URN.

SALESMAN  
Picture this. A grieving widow wishes her dearly departed to be cremated. The ashes are added to the urn. But in what dignified way could the remains be presented? I give you the Caddy Ash.

Slowly he lowers the urn into the bag and tightens the drawstring, bows, and presents it like a crown to the queen. Mrs Basham does not respond but her eyes continue to narrow.

Undeterred the salesman reveals his next item - a SMALL GONG.

SALESMAN  
You'll like this one. Being in the industry you'll recognize the saying 'Saved by the Bell'. Once a common item, a small bell would be attached to a coffin for those with a fear of being buried alive. Big in our Asian market, this is our 'Saved by the Gong' line.

He bangs the gong which gives off a feeble hollow sound.



SALESMAN (CONT'D)

We have 'Saved by the Bongo',  
'Saved by the Triangle' and 'Saved  
by the Tambourine'. A wire attaches  
to the deceased's finger. It's  
really quite fun.

CLOSE-UP of Mrs Basham's eyes as they narrow to a point.

EXT. ASHES TO BASHAM'S - DAY

The salesman's SUITCASE sails out the front door, useless crap  
flying everywhere. It is closely followed by --

THE SALESMAN

Who lands on his back. Mrs Basham wheels herself outside, arm  
and finger raised.

MRS BASHAM

And don't come back!

INT. BASHAMS' OFFICE - DAY

Mrs Basham trundles back inside furious. Winnie ignores her.

MRS BASHAM

Wasting my precious time with that  
load of rubbish. Urns in a bag!

(beat)

Did the Gowans deliver the flowers  
for the Hunt and Crenshaw funerals?

WINNIE

No.

MRS BASHAM

Right! That's it. I've had enough  
of those twats. Where's the phone?

INTERCUT INT. GOWAN FLORISTS/BASHAMS' OFFICE - DAY

FREDDY GOWAN attempts to finish three displays simultaneously,  
a flower in his teeth. The PHONE RINGS and he answers.

FREDDY

(into phone)

Gowan Florists. Freddy Gowan.

MRS BASHAM  
 (into phone)  
 Gowan, where's my displays?

FREDDY  
 (into phone)  
 Mrs B, how lovely to hear your  
 sweet voice.

MRS BASHAM  
 (into phone)  
 Cut the crap. I've a viewing later  
 and funerals tomorrow. Where's my  
 bloody flowers?

FREDDY  
 (into phone)  
 I'm finishing them as we speak.  
 Rachael's sick and I've also three  
 weddings. I'm doing my best, Mrs B.

MRS BASHAM (V.O.)  
 Don't you Mrs B me. Get off your  
 lazy arse and deliver my flowers or  
 I'll come over there and plant them  
 where the sun don't shine.

The call is cut. Freddy is stressed and furious. He begins to  
 rip out his display.

FREDDY  
 Two can play at that game.

EXT. REAR OF FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Jimmy plays catch with Tiger near the INDUSTRIAL BINS. Tiger  
 chases a BALL, tail wagging. A TRAMP idles up the path.

TRAMP  
 That's a nice dog. What's its name?

JIMMY  
 Tiger. My dad thinks I found him in  
 a skip.

TRAMP  
 He seems a smart little thing.

Jimmy throws the ball and Tiger fetches it. Jimmy gives the  
 ball to the tramp.

JIMMY

Here, have a go.

The tramp winds up and launches the ball high. It lands in the industrial bins. Tiger scrambles in after it.

MRS BASHAM (O.S.)

(yells)

Jimmy! Get in here.

The tramp is distracted as Jimmy nips inside just as Tiger returns. He turns his attention back to the dog with the ball in his mouth. Except it's not a ball but a --

HUMAN HAND!

TRAMP

Agghh!

The tramp screams and legs it. Tiger lifts the hand which is clearly plastic. He sits wagging his tail.

INT. STUDY - CRENSHAW'S HOME - NIGHT

The end of the Wake. Some guests linger in the adjoining PATIO as Billy, Ricky and Mike enter. Crenshaw stomps over to them.

CRENSHAW

Look at the mess of the place. The carpet's ruined, the door will need replaced and the coffin's damaged.

The carpet has black masking tape holding it in place.

BILLY

I apologize again, Mr Crenshaw. We will take the coffin without any further incident, I assure you.

CRENSHAW

(folds arms)

Well she's not leaving that way. So undignified. And the patio's not an option.

MIKE

How are we supposed to get it out?

CRENSHAW

Not my problem. I have to leave my aunt home. Any more damage and I sue, understand?

BILLY

We understand.

CRENSHAW

You better. Father Lowry is  
conducting the funeral tomorrow. I  
will meet you at St. Mary's.

Crenshaw leaves them. Mike scratches his head.

MIKE

We could always unscrew it. Take it  
out piece by piece.

RICKY

And do the same with Mrs Crenshaw?

Billy stands next to the WINDOW overlooking the BACK GARDEN.

BILLY

Through here.

RICKY

Out the window? It won't fit.

BILLY

There's no other way. We'll have to  
take out the frame.

RICKY

Billy ...

MIKE

No, he's right, Ricky. I'll bring  
the tools round.

INT. PATIO - CRENSHAW'S HOME - NIGHT

The remaining guests grieve with ORCHESTRAL MUSIC playing in  
the background. Through the glass doors the camera catches  
Billy and Ricky struggling to hold the dislodged WINDOW.  
Mike's arms reach in from the garden. The window is removed.

Next is the coffin. Billy and Ricky lift it onto the  
windowsill and slide it through. It WOBBLER in time with the  
music, the men scrambling to keep it steady. The mourners are  
oblivious to what is going on behind them. Then the --

COFFIN TILTS HIGH

And --

ZOOMS OUT THE WINDOW!

Ricky & Billy rush to check on Mike.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - CRENSHAW'S HOME - NIGHT

Pinned under the COFFIN, Mike strains to get free, his legs and arms flailing.

INT. RICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ricky collapses on the sofa and switches on the TV. The door BURSTS open and his daughter CLAIRE and son CHRIS run in. 16-year-old Claire clutches her computer TABLET to her chest.

CLAIRE  
Dad, tell him to go away.

RICKY  
Shh! You'll wake up Paul.

Chris closes the door and lingers in the background.

RICKY (CONT'D)  
Okay Claire, what's the problem?

CLAIRE  
He keeps trying to use my tablet.  
It was my birthday present.

RICKY  
Can't you just share?

CLAIRE  
Urgh! I don't know what websites he goes on. No way.

RICKY  
Chris, can't you use the laptop?

CHRIS  
It's been broken for two weeks. I did tell you but this house is full of simpletons. If I had my own smart phone ...

RICKY  
I told you - no smart phones. Not until you're older.

CLAIRE

And you're not using mine either.

CHRIS

So how can I do my homework?

RICKY

Do you really need the Internet to do your homework now? When I was at school computers were made by the BBC and we read real books, not face books.

CHRIS

It's Facebook - singular, not plural - and anyway the assignment is on online fraud, something I need to do online.

RICKY

(watches TV)

It's up to your sister. It's her tablet.

CLAIRE

Ha! There's more chance of you growing a proper beard.

Claire walks away triumphant but Chris has a plan forming.

INT. MIKES'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike enters the living room with two bundles under his arm. The place is in near darkness bar the flicker of the TV screen. Sitting snoring in a threadbare chair is his GRANDPA BOBBY who begins to stir at the smell of food.

MIKE

Wake up, you old fart. You could have boiled the kettle.

BOBBY

You got the grub?

Mike tosses Bobby FISH & CHIPS wrapped in a NEWSPAPER.

BOBBY

They better not have vinegar.

MIKE

They don't, Grandpa. And I went to Tony's like you asked. I know he's your mate but his fish is rotten.

BOBBY

That's not why I use Tony.

MIKE

Oh?

Bobby dumps his food onto a dirty plate and holds up the newspaper.

BOBBY

Did he keep her? Yes! Good man, Tony.

MIKE

Keep who?

BOBBY

(squints)

Tracey, 22 from Poole. Likes gymnastics and has a pair of knockers the size of bowling balls.

Bobby carefully folds up the Page 3 section and slips it into his pocket. They munch on their food.

MIKE

Did the centre pick you up?

BOBBY

Eventually. Maggie was driving again. Phwoar, that's a piece of top choice meat. I couldn't stand up without my third leg winking at her. Get her bucked!

MIKE

What about that other one? Linda isn't it?

BOBBY

Don't get me wrong, Linda's the type of woman that would tear chunks from your back all night but Maggie has that innocence, you know? Like butter wouldn't melt.

MIKE

What age are they again?

BOBBY

Linda's eighty next month. Maggie's near retirement.

MIKE

I once went with an older bird.

BOBBY

Bollocks.

MIKE

I did. Ehm, Aggie, that was it. She was a drooper. Nipples down to her knees. When she walked it looked like she had four arms swinging.

BOBBY

Kid, you've never been with a mature woman. If you did you'd know all about it. They leave a mark on you, and not just on your hairy joystick. Anyway, I thought you were after that young thing working at Bashams?

MIKE

Amanda? Too easy a challenge. All those teenagers want is to hump. I want to be with a real woman, someone with experience.

BOBBY

(winks)

Plus you don't need a Johnny. Menopause.

Bobby wipes his lips and rises. He points to a stack of MAGAZINES piles in the corner.

BOBBY

There's my collection of older tarts. Just don't rip the pages. Some are a bit difficult to open.

Mike makes a disgusted face.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

And if you excuse me I have a date with young Tracey from Poole.

Bobby shuffles off as Mike stares at the stack of dirty magazines. He looks nervous.



BOBBY (O.S.)

Where's the toilet roll? We've run  
out of tissues.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire readies herself for a shower. She LOCKS her TABLET in a desk before leaving. As the door closes Chris is revealed to be standing behind it.

He approaches the desk and pulls a STRAIGHTENED COAT HANGER from his trousers. It slides into the desk to unlock it.

Tablet switched on, it asks for a password. Chris has a few attempts but no success. He looks around. Typical teenager girl's room - clothes everywhere, bursting bin, photos plaster the walls. He spots a PICTURE of his sister with her boyfriend. A written caption reads 'ILUVDAN4EVA'. He types it in and eBay displays. Chris smiles and begins to type.

INT. BASHAMS' OFFICE - DAY

Billy sits next to WINNIE and switches on his MOBILE. There are 10 missed calls. He checks his VOICEMAIL.

CRENSHAW (V.O.)

Basham, pick up! You've left my house a mess. The study window is now at a slant and there's a hole in my back garden. I will be contacting my solicitor. My wife's coffin better be ready or I'll take you for every penny you own.

BILLY

(hangs up)

Not good. St. Mary's was shut before we could get there. There's a few scratches on the name plate too. Is Jimmy about?

Winnie ignores him as she works on her computer.

BILLY

Probably playing with that damn dog. He better have left it at home.

Billy goes to find Jimmy, leaving his mobile. Winnie snatches it and opens her desk DRAWER. Hidden inside is a stash of STOLEN GOODS - jewellery, phones, purses. She drops the mobile in and browses to eBay. Her user name is ITS-A-STEAL, her seller's page chocked full of stolen goods. She adds a listing and types in 'Mobile Smart Phone - Like New'.

BODY PREP ROOM

Billy finds Jimmy playing with Tiger throwing a BALL.

JIMMY

Look at this, Dad.

Tiger trots to Jimmy to drop the ball. Billy takes TWO NAME PLATES from his pocket to set them on the table.

BILLY

Found him in a skip? You should have left him there. Now do something useful and attach these name plates. That's Molly Crenshaw and that's John Hunt. Don't get them confused.

JIMMY

Duh, I won't.

BILLY

We'll drop them at St. Mary's in fifteen minutes.

Billy turns to leave as Tiger sets the ball by his feet, wagging his tail expectantly. Billy tuts and exits.

INT. GOWAN FLORISTS - DAY

Mrs Basham rolls into the flower shop. A few STACKED BOXES lie to the side. Freddy Gowan comes in from the back.

MRS BASHAM

Where's my flowers, Gowan?

FREDDY

(nods to boxes)

Right here. I took your advice, applied myself, worked hard. They are extra special displays.

MRS BASHAM

Where's what's-her-name? Your wife.

FREDDY

Rachael. She's got the flu.

Mrs Basham wraps her scarf around her mouth as if the Black Death has arrived.

MRS BASHAM

She shouldn't be working around the public then, should she?

FREDDY

That's why she's at home, Mrs Basham.

MRS BASHAM

I want a discount.

FREDDY

For what reason?

MRS BASHAM

I could get sick just being here.

FREDDY

Don't be ridiculous.

MRS BASHAM

Who are you calling ridiculous? My cousin got AIDS from touching a clock once.

FREDDY

Are you sure it was a clock?

MRS BASHAM

That's what she said. A big friggin' clock gave her AIDS.

FREDDY

The only clock here is on my wrist, Mrs Basham, and you won't be touching that.

MRS BASHAM

I still should get a discount for getting these at the last minute.

FREDDY

(exasperated)

Fine. 10% discount, okay?

MRS BASHAM

Well don't just stand there. Get  
the flowers into the car.

Freddy struggles with the boxes to bring them outside. Mrs  
Basham calls after him.

MRS BASHAM

Friggin' wimp. They're only  
flowers.

INT. BODY PREP ROOM - DAY

Jimmy throws the BALL. It hits the TABLE sending the NAME  
PLATES flying. Jimmy picks them up, confused. He looks at the  
closed caskets.

JIMMY

That one's Molly Crenshaw?

Tiger BARKS. Jimmy nods as if the dog is right.

INT. BASHAMS' OFFICE - DAY

Winnie is checking her eBay listings when the door is flung  
open. Ian Crenshaw strides in with Amanda chasing him.

AMANDA

You can't come in here.

CRENSHAW

Where's that little rat Billy  
Basham? I demand to seem him now.

Cool as dried ice Winnie spins to speak.

WINNIE

Amanda. Leave.

Amanda exits and closes the door.

WINNIE

Mr Basham is not here.

CRENSHAW

He wrecked my home. I want  
immediate compensation.

WINNIE

Who are you?

CRENSHAW

Who am I? I'm Ian Crenshaw, missy, and I'm paying you to bury my wife today. Instead you seem determined to destroy all my possessions and my sanity.

WINNIE

Ian Crenshaw - any ID?

CRENSHAW

Why in the blazes do I need ID?

WINNIE

Company policy.

Flabbergasted, Crenshaw pulls out his DRIVER'S LICENSE and tosses it on the desk.

CRENSHAW

There. Oh, my solicitor is going to love this. The judge will throw the book at you. A bunch of conmen.

Winnie makes a PHOTOCOPY of the license. She throws the license back at Crenshaw who catches it with a snap.

WINNIE

Mr Basham will be back later.

CRENSHAW

He better, and if anything else goes wrong with the funeral ...

He wags his finger. Winnie sits expressionless as if he's not there. With a puff, Crenshaw leaves.

Winnie lifts the photocopy and swivels to her computer. She changes her fake eBay profile details to Ian Crenshaw's.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

Ricky and Jimmy drive the empty HEARSE to park at the entrance of St. Mary's Church.

INT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

FATHER LOWRY is organising the place for the funeral later that morning. He is robed in a GREEN CHAUSABLE (gown). The undertakers approach him.

RICKY  
Morning, Father.

FR. LOWRY  
Morning, morning. What a week this  
has been. Three deaths. They expect  
a man of my age to conduct all  
these funerals and say Mass twice  
on Sunday.

RICKY  
Who's the other one?

FR. LOWRY  
Joan Blunt.

RICKY  
Who's doing that funeral?

FR. LOWRY  
Ronny Slime's lot.

RICKY  
Those pricks.

FR. LOWRY  
You're here for the Hunt service at  
twelve?

RICKY  
Yes, then Molly Crenshaw at two.

FR. LOWRY  
Billy left the coffins in the side  
porch.  
(checks clothes)  
Damn, I'm wearing the wrong colour.

Fr. Lowry goes to leave.

FR. LOWRY (CONT.)  
I won't be long. They should start  
arriving soon. You know the drill.

Exit Fr. Lowry via main aisle. Ricky turns to Jimmy.

RICKY  
I'll get the incense, you bring in  
the coffin.

INT. SIDE PORCH - ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

Jimmy enters the side porch at the rear of the church to retrieve Mr Hunt's coffin but finds there are THREE COFFINS. Each is draped in the same Pall (covering). Jimmy lifts the closest coffin's Pall but can't read the name plate in the darkness. He goes to return, shrugs his shoulders then takes the coffin regardless.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Mike waits outside the widow Mrs Hunt's MANSION listening to Gangsta rap music. MRS HUNT steps out and Mike's jaw falls. Drop-dead gorgeous for her age - early sixties - and wears a tight black dress. He follows her every step as she and a FRIEND approach the car. Mike realizes the music is still blaring and switches it off just before they get in.

MIKE

Morning.

Mrs Hunt nods in reply, tissue pressed to her nose. All seated, Mike sets off. As they travel he keeps glancing in the mirror at the attractive widow, trying to steal a look at her bare legs.

MIKE

So, Mrs Hunt, that's a lovely house you have. Must have cost a fortune?

MRS HUNT

John dealt with all of that, I really wouldn't know.

Mike drums the steering wheel still staring.

MIKE

It's nice to see you have kept in such great shape over the years. What age are you? Forty? Fifty?

MRS HUNT

(uncomfortable)  
Sixty-two.

MIKE

(to himself)  
Yum.

MRS HUNT

Excuse me?

MIKE

Mum. My mum is sixty-two but she looks like an old hag compared to you. You work out?

MRS HUNT

I swim and spin.

MIKE

Spin? Is that like cycling?

MRS HUNT

Yes.

MIKE

Must make you sweat. You sweat a lot?

Mrs Hunt looks out the window trying to ignore him. Mike drives in silence for a few moments but can't resist.

MIKE

I hear that the average time to grieve over your husband is two months, depending on how long you were married. You together long?

MRS HUNT

Twenty-four years.

MIKE

Of course some women find comfort in another man's arms right away, especially a younger man. Takes their mind off things.

MRS HUNT

I really wouldn't know.

MIKE

Oh yeah, it's true. Big strong arms to cry on. Do you have anyone like that in your life?

Mrs Hunt turns to her friend and begins to chat quietly. Mike cannot hear over the sound of the engine. He leans back over the seat to talk while driving.

MIKE

I could be that man, Mrs Hunt. Someone to hold on to, I mean.



MRS HUNT  
 (horrified)  
 An undertaker?

MIKE  
 It's all part of the service.

The hearse veers onto the other side of the road. A BUS approaches beeping its horn.

MRS HUNT  
 Watch out!

Mike turns his head to see the bus. He YANKS the steering wheel over, narrowly missing an accident. Everyone seems shaken except for him.

MIKE  
 Remember, Mrs Hunt, I could be that man.

INT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

A full congregation watches Fr. Lowry, now dressed in purple, finish giving Holy Communion. The COFFIN rests below the Altar, covered by a Pall. Mrs Hunt cries into her tissue on the front row. Ricky and Mike stand to the side with Jimmy waiting in the hearse. Mike ogles the widow.

As the priest concludes Ricky and Mike step to lift off the Pall and fold it up. Fr. Lowry moves to the foot of the coffin to face the mourners.

FR. LOWRY  
 Before we go our separate ways we take leave of our brother. Though we depart in sorrow we commend John to the mercy of God.

Ricky hands Fr. Lowry HOLY WATER in a container and a STOOP (sprinkler). The priest moves anti-clockwise around the coffin sprinkling the water. He glances at the NAME PLATE on the lid and does a double-take. Returning the water and Stoop, he bows to Ricky, his back to the congregation.

FR. LOWRY  
 It's the wrong coffin.

Ricky's face is ashen. Fr. Lowry takes the INCENSE and makes another circuit of the coffin, idly checking the name to confirm. He bows to Ricky.

RICKY  
 (whispers)  
 What do we do?

FR. LOWRY  
 (while bowing)  
 Leave it to me.

Fr. Lowry addresses the mourners.

FR. LOWRY  
 In peace let us take our brother to  
 his place of rest. As a sign of  
 respect may the family lead us  
 outside and after we have all left  
 our brother will depart.

The mourners murmur. Ricky turns to Mike who raises his eyebrows. Mrs Hunt is helped to her feet by her friend. The family file out but she lingers behind. Suddenly --

MRS HUNT

Dashes to the coffin.

MRS HUNT  
 Oh, John! Please don't leave me.  
 Let me see your face one last time.

She begins to unscrew the latches on the coffin. The crowd have stopped to stare. Fr. Lowry mouths to Ricky --

FR. LOWRY  
 (mouths)  
 Stop her!

Ricky has no idea what to do. Mike rushes past him. He swoops Mrs Hunt into his arms and kisses her. The crowd is stunned. Putting her back on her feet, Mike waits for the inevitable slap. Instead Mrs Hunt smiles and bites her lip.

FR. LOWRY  
 Please continue to make your way  
 outside. Thank you.

The remainder of the mourners file out. Mike puts his arm around Mrs Hunt to lead her away. Once the doors are shut Fr. Lowry hoists up his gown.

FR. LOWRY  
 Switch them! I'll meet you outside.

Fr. Lowry rushes off leaving Ricky to push the coffin into --

SIDE PORCH

The other two coffins sit in the gloom. Ricky removes their Palls but in the darkness can hardly see the name plates. He rubs his chin, checks his watch then grabs one.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

Ricky pushes a different coffin outside to be met by a horde of mourners forming a path to the open hearse. Mike has Mrs Hunt pressed against him and gives Ricky a knowing wink.

Jimmy helps Ricky load the coffin. He hears Fr. Lowry COUGH abruptly and looks up. The priest's face is fierce and he is shaking his head. Ricky reads the name plate on the coffin - 'JOAN BLUNT'. Unable to do anything else, he shuts the hearse and gets inside with Jimmy.

INT. HEARSE - DAY

Ricky starts the vehicle and begins to drive slowly.

RICKY

It's the wrong friggin' coffin.  
It's the wrong friggin' coffin.

Jimmy glances over his shoulder.

JIMMY

Looks okay to me.

Ricky drums his fingers against the wheel, deep in thought. He puts in his BLUETOOTH EARPIECE and connects to the office.

INTERCUT INT. BASHAM'S OFFICE/HEARSE - DAY

Winnie sits idly painting her nails when the phone goes. She answers it after five rings.

WINNIE

(into phone)  
Ashes to Bashams Undertakers.

RICKY

(into earpiece)  
Winnie, is your dad there?

WINNIE

(into phone)  
No.

RICKY (V.O.)  
Where is he?

WINNIE  
(into phone)  
Out.

RICKY  
(into earpiece)  
This is an emergency. I suppose his  
phone's still lost. Can you send  
him a message somehow?

Winnie continues with her nails giving no notice to the call.

RICKY (V.O.)  
Tell him he needs to bring the  
second hearse to St Mary's. There's  
been a mix up. He needs to collect  
the right coffin and bring it to  
Randall Cemetery. Tell him to meet  
me by the entrance.

RICKY (CONT'D)  
(into earpiece)  
Winnie? You writing this down?

Winnie picks at her nails, no pen in sight.

WINNIE  
(into phone)  
Mmm hmm.

RICKY  
(into earpiece)  
Tell him I'm on my way there now.  
I'll take the longer route. It'll  
buy us some time.

Winnie hangs up. Billy enters.

BILLY  
Who was that?

WINNIE  
Ricky.

BILLY  
Anything wrong?

WINNIE

He's messed up the funeral. Took the wrong coffin.

BILLY

Oh balls!

WINNIE

You need to pick up the right one then meet him at Randall Cemetery. And Mum says you forgot to bring the flowers.

Billy reaches for his keys and pulls on his coat.

BILLY

Any luck finding my phone?

Winnie ignores him. Billy runs out the door. Winnie checks her eBay listing - 12 bids so far for Billy's phone.

EXT. TOWN CENTRE - DAY

Ricky drives the hearse at a snail's pace through the busy town centre. A trail of cars sticks to him.

INT. SIDE PORCH - ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

Billy arrives at the church. He stops when he sees there are two coffins.

BILLY

Which funeral was it?

He checks his pockets for his mobile then remembers it is lost. He points to the coffins.

BILLY

Eenie, meanie, mynie, mo.

EXT. ROUNDABOUT - DAY

The hearse and its entourage encircle a large roundabout.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

Billy finishes loading the coffin into the hearse. We are unsure which one. He drives away at breakneck speed.

INT. HEARSE - DAY

Car horns blare behind him as Ricky checks his watch.

RICKY  
He should have got it by now.

EXT. RANDALL CEMETARY - DAY

Billy stands outside the SECOND HEARSE biting his nails. Up ahead the first hearse roars into view over a steep hill. It screeches to a halt beside him and Ricky and Jimmy jump out.

RICKY  
I've given them the slip. Quick,  
swap places.

Ricky and Jimmy commandeering the second hearse, backing it up. Billy drives off in the first hearse. The mourners appear over the brow of the hill and enter the cemetery behind them.

EXT. GRAVESIDE - DAY

Ricky opens the rear door of the hearse to reveal the correct coffin. He and Jimmy put it on two poles over the open grave.

RICKY  
The flowers!

Jimmy races back to fetch the flowers. They are still boxed. He grabs them and runs back.

RICKY  
Put them on the coffin and I'll  
greet the mourners.

Ricky runs to the road as the mourners arrive in their cars. Jimmy opens the boxes. He looks at them both, eyebrows raised, shrugs and takes them out.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - CEMETERY - DAY

Mike steps out of the limousine and opens the rear door for Mrs Hunt and her friend. He gives Mrs Hunt a wink which she returns. Ricky calls him over to talk.

RICKY  
We got the coffin switched.

MIKE

Nice one.

RICKY

How is she?

MIKE

Wettest lips I've ever tasted,  
mate.

RICKY

I mean is she stable? She isn't  
going jump into the grave is she?

MIKE

Nah. I have her under control.

They walk along the path towards the grave. There is a distinct murmur of disapproval ringing through the crowd. Father Lowry stands at the grave, his face nearly purple.

Ricky pushes his way through the mourners. On top of the coffin lid a flower display has been laid. It reads 'TO MY BELOVED JOHN HUNT' except that the 'H' of Hunt has been changed to a 'C' (blurred out but it's obvious). Jimmy stands next to it grinning like an idiot.

END OF FUNERAL

Fr. Lowry finishes the burial ceremony as the others surround it. Mrs Hunt holds onto a smug Mike. Ricky is relieved at last. Fr. Lowry blesses the coffin with HOLY WATER.

FR. LOWRY

We commit the body of our brother  
for we are dust and onto dust we  
shall return.

MRS HUNT

Wait!

Mrs Hunt approaches the coffin. Mike is left hanging.

MRS HUNT

Can I see him? Just one last time?

Ricky looks to Fr. Lowry who gives a reluctant nod. He and Mike unscrew the lid. They prise it open to reveal --

THE BODY OF MOLLY CRENSHAW.

MRS HUNT

Where is he? Where's my John?

Fr. Lowry looks mystified. Jimmy realizes the mix up is his fault and slinks back. CAMERA PANS away as Mrs Hunt searches the coffin for her husband. The mourners walk away in disgust.

INT. RICKY'S HOME - DAY

Chris holds a sealed brown PARCEL by the entrance of the house. The label shows it's from eBay account 'ITS-A-STEAL'. He tears the paper off to find BILLY'S MOBILE PHONE.

Switching it on, the background image is of the ASHES TO BASHAMS building.

The FRONT DOOR opens and Ricky comes in dressed in his black suit. He lifts a set of keys from the hook when he sees Chris.

RICKY

Chris? Why aren't you at school?

CHRIS

Teacher strike.

Ricky notices the mobile phone, looks closer, recognizes it.

RICKY

Billy's phone! How did it end up here? Doesn't matter, he's been looking everywhere for it. Nice one, son.

He rubs Chris's hair, takes the phone and exits. Chris slumps his shoulders, foiled again.

INT. CRENSHAW'S HOME - DAY

Ian Crenshaw opens the door in black tuxedo and tie. TWO DETECTIVES are standing there. He mistakes them for salesmen.

DETECTIVE #1

Mr Ian Crenshaw?

CRENSHAW

I don't want to buy anything so go away. I'm running late for a funeral.



DETECTIVE #2

Detective Long, Detective Peters.  
We need to ask you some questions  
regarding selling stolen goods on  
an online auction website.

Crenshaw opens his mouth in protest as the detectives barge their way inside and push him in. They SLAM the door shut.

EXT. REAR GARDEN - CRENSHAW'S HOME - DAY

The slanted WINDOW falls to the ground with the slam of the front door, breaking the glass.

POST CREDITS:

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Mrs Hunt opens the door to find Mike standing there cradling Tiger in his arms. She bites her lip and ushers them inside as Tiger licks Mike's face.

THE END