

TONY'S SMOKEHOUSE CREMATORIUM

PILOT EPISODE: HELL, HELL, THE GANG'S ALL HERE

a 30-minute sitcom

Written by

Tom Stohlgren

based on his feature script of the same title

Representation:
Eleni Larchanidou, LLM
Literary & Talent Manager
GREECE: +30-697-9619813
(WhatsApp, Viber)
USA: +1-714-702-5507
movieselenilllm2014@gmail.com
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Tony's Smokehouse Crematorium

Pilot Episode: Hell, Hell, the Gang's All Here

COLD OPEN

EXT. KITCHEN/CREMATORIUM - NIGHT

We see a rusty, unlit neon sign on an old fast-food restaurant that reads: "Smokehouse Restaurant" and a hand-painted poster that reads, "Tony's Crematorium." Atop the old restaurant is another sign that reads, "Try our extra-crispy ribs."

INT. KITCHEN/CREMATORIUM - NIGHT

TONY RUGGIERO (20s), an irreverent mortician/cashier, looks like he's wearing a full black tuxedo from outside the drive-up window. From inside, we see he's wearing a "tuxedo costume coat" (tuxedo-front, a white sewn in half-shirt, and bow tie that connect behind his neck with Velcro). From behind, we see the back of his Hawaiian shirt, raggedy shorts, and hightop black tennis shoes.

Behind Tony, we briefly see a recently renovated fast-food restaurant-turned-crematorium complete with a large pizza-oven-looking furnace and a walk-in refrigerator. Tony stares at the drive-thru mirror awaiting the first customer, rocking out on his ear-buds.

We see the owner/manager, JAMAL CURRY (20s), the brains of the outfit, a handsome African-American dressed in casual street clothes. He glares at his wild partner and best friend, before he slowly opens a coffin on the floor of the restaurant. There is a net under the coffin tied to an overhead pulley.

Jamal is relieved to find the coffin empty.

JAMAL

Tony, where are the girls?

Tony glances back.

TONY

They're not in there, Jamal?

JAMAL

Don't wear out your tuxedo. First customer isn't until eight PM!

Tony disconnects the Velcro strap behind his neck, and the tuxedo coat slips off his arms, while his phone rings to the tune of "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead."

TONY

Kelli texted. One minute out.

Jamal shakes his head in disgust as he checks the temperature (it reads 800 degrees). The heat knocks him back.

JAMAL

Surprised she still wants to work here after you two split.

TONY

I think she still loves me.

JAMAL

Let's go over it again.

Jamal races to the walk-in refrigerator.

TONY

I know it by heart.

JAMAL

We take the stiff from the fridge.
(mumbles)
God, I hate dead people.

Jamal points to the back window of the restaurant, and opens black curtains.

TONY

Load him into the coffin for the drive-thru viewing by the family and friends.

Jamal points to a slanted mirror on the ceiling.

JAMAL

Right! They see the corpse in the mirror.

TONY

How long do we give 'em to mourn?

JAMAL

Long as they need. It's their funeral.

TONY

Then, they come up here and pay, while you and the girls roast him.

JAMAL
Cremate him!

Tony replaces his ear-buds with an audio-headset with microphone. He stares out his window at the drive-up lane.

TONY
Asses to ashes, as they say!

JAMAL
Nobody says that! Remember, no cash or checks. Credit cards only. And be respectful. You're the front-man. Don't forget it!

TONY
Then, they come back in the morning and pick up the ashes. We'll be rich!

JAMAL
My best business idea ever! Why would people pay four-to-seven grand for a burial, or two-to-four grand for a regular cremation, when we can toast 'em for \$499?!

Jamal proudly stands by the oven.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
The latest energy-efficient Betcher-Asher 2020 Furnace! Baby can handle four bodies a night!

TONY
Lease with an option to fry? Did it come with a dustpan?

JAMAL
Built in bone-crusher and remains collector! Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

TONY
I like my slogan: "Asses to ashes, dust to dustpans."

JAMAL
Get serious!
(beat)
I saw the girls drive up.

Tony slips on his tuxedo costume and turns on his audio-headset.

Entering the backdoor first is KELLI MATTHEWS (20s), an attractive, but hard-looking brunette in a tank-top and shorts, with tattoos on her arms and legs. She runs up to Tony and punches him for fun, for an embarrassing long time, easily seen from the drive-up window.

We can also HEAR Tony giggling from the outside speaker by the drive-up menu.

TONY

Kelli?!

KELLI

Teasing you, Tony. Ex's get to punch ex-boyfriends. It's the law. You'll never have me again. Alive or dead!

JAMAL

Don't get him too excited, Kelli. He won't be able to function.

KELLI

So excited to have a real job, even if it means working with Tony! Better than schlepping for tips when this dump was the Smokehouse! They didn't remove the old signs yet!

Kelli kisses Jamal on the cheek. He hugs him hard.

JAMAL

Last week, the sign installers said. Grand Opening's tonight anyway!

HUAN LI (20s) a Chinese-American, conservatively dressed in black Capris pants, a pressed white shirt, and black eyeglasses races in glaring at Kelli and Jamal.

HUAN

(to Kelli)

Get a room, you two. We've got work to do.

(to Jamal)

I need the money for school, only reason I'm here! Can't believe you didn't call it Jamal's Crematorium. Some leadership!

JAMAL

Tony's sounds better, and Curry's
Crematorium sounded like a bad
Indian restaurant!

KELLI

Get a sense of humor, Huan! We can
cremate with the best of 'em! What
would you do? Stir-fry 'em?

Jamal checks his watch and panics.

He races to the walk-in refrigerator. Kelli and Huan follow.

JAMAL

First customers are going to be
here any minute. We gotta get Mr.
Wilson in the casket!

A BUZZER sounds above Tony's cashier window. He yells. We
hear Tony's voice directly, and from the speaker outside by
the old menu stand.

TONY

Shit! The Wilson's are here!

In a flurry of activity, Jamal and the girls lift the
overweight MR. WILSON (50s), a gray-haired, African American
in a dark suit, white shirt, and necktie, from the
refrigerator to the coffin, and struggle to lay him inside.
Jamal closes the lid.

We hear a Teenage Boy from the speaker above Tony's head.

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)

Give me two orders of ribs, extra-
crispy.

Jamal hand-cranks the pulley, as the girls struggle to guide
the coffin to the viewing window.

The coffin sways like it's about to go through the window.
Jamal panics.

JAMAL

Straighten it out, or we'll be
scraping him off the street again!

TONY

This ain't the Smokehouse. It
closed.

The coffin finally gets straightened, and rests on a table
below the tilted mirrors.

Jamal opens the coffin lid.

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)
Two orders of them curly fries.

TONY
Not a fast-food joint anymore. It's
a crema...

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)
And two medium Cokes. That's it!

JAMAL
Where are his glasses? Where's his
gold watch!

KELLI
I put 'em in the desk drawer,
earlier today. He ain't gonna need
'em! His eyes can't see the time,
anyway!

Huan races to the desk, grabs the glasses and watch, and
hands them to Jamal.

TONY
Restaurant's out of business! Get
lost! We have a cremation to do in
one minute!

HUAN
Family expects to see them, idiot!

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)
Closed? The sign's still up!

JAMAL
Tuxedos quick.

Huan and Kelli slip on "tuxedo costume coats" (tuxedo-front,
sewn in half-shirts, and bow ties that connect behind their
necks with Velcro; like Tony's).

Jamal slips on Mr. Wilson's gold watch and glasses, but the
glasses are comically crocked. Huan glares at Jamal.

Jamal mumbles as he slips on his tuxedo costume, and joins
Huan and Kelli after slowly opening the black curtains for
the viewing.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
If they don't like dying, they're
sure gonna hate finding out there's
no afterlife!

Huan and Kelli turn to Jamal with a sour look.

As the curtain opens, we see the Teenager Boy RACE past in a Nissan sedan flipping the bird to Jamal and staff. Tony waves, as the driver screeches away.

TONY

I'll give you extra-crispy ribs,
you teenage mutant Nissan turd!

Tony laughs. Jamal, Kelli, and Huan look disappointed and it's the END OF THE COLD OPEN.

ACT ONE

The staff hears the buzzer sound back by the menu.

They hear MRS. CHARISE WILSON (50s), a sorrowful middle-aged female, sobbing from the menu ordering box, as Jamal closes the viewing curtains.

MRS. WILSON (O.S.)
 Who you calling a mutant turd? Is
 this Tony's Crematorium? We're here
 for the service?

Tony's eyes open widely, as he poorly reads from handwritten notes.

TONY
 Mrs. Charise Wilson? So sorry for
 your loss.

Jamal opens the curtains, and gives Tony a thumbs up. Jamal, Huan, and Kelli stand respectfully behind the coffin.

MRS. WILSON (O.S.)
 Can we see Daddy one last time?

Tony acts mature and solemn.

TONY
 That's why we're here, Mrs. Wilson.

Jamal nods positively to Tony.

TONY (CONT'D)
 Please drive forward to the viewing
 window.

Mrs. Wilson drives forward in an old station wagon filled with her four large sons (20s-30s) in black suits. They stop at the viewing window to see Mr. Wilson in the over-head mirrors tilted to see the casket, and they see Jamal, Huan, and Kelli from the waist-up (looking like they're wearing full tuxedos).

We see Jamal, Huan, Kelli from inside, showing the half-tuxedos, Jamal and Kelli's legs, and Huan's red Capris pants.

We hear the Wilsons sobbing and crying as they stare at Mr. Wilson's body lying in state wearing crooked glasses.

Tony speaks up confidently.

TONY (CONT'D)

Not to worry, Mrs. Wilson. We'll
take excellent care of him.

Jamal glares over at Tony, trying to get him to shut up.

TONY (CONT'D)

Do we still call you, Mrs. Wilson?
I mean, he's not only your late-
husband, he ain't coming back!

We hear an outburst of cries from the station wagon.

Jamal clears his throat, but can't get Tony's attention.

TONY (CONT'D)

Take all the time you need, but we
do have a busy schedule tonight!

Jamal races to Tony to grab his arm with one hand, and he covers the headset microphone with his other hand. Jamal whispers angrily.

JAMAL

Idiot! Be respectful. Give them all
the time they need!

Tony whispers back.

TONY

Got it, Boss.

Jamal slowly strides back to the casket.

TONY (CONT'D)

Take all the time you need, Mrs.
Wilson. We're in no hurry, and
neither is he.

We hear another outburst of cries from the station wagon.

Jamal glares at Tony again.

Mrs. Wilson opens the door to the station wagon and leaps out to press her face to the window to see her husband.

MRS. WILSON

Daddy! Oh, Daddy! Killed by two hit-
and-run drivers on the same night!

Mrs. Wilson glances past her husband in the casket, and sees the lower legs of Jamal, Huan, and Kelli.

Jamal sees Mrs. Wilson's angry expression, and closes the curtain.

Mrs. Wilson returns to the car, races forward, and slams on the brakes at the cashier's window.

Mrs. Wilson is fuming mad.

TONY

That'll be four-hundred-ninety-nine dollars, please. We take all major credit cards.

Tony turns his body to look at a wall clock behind him, exposing his Hawaiian shirt in the back of his half-tuxedo.

MRS. WILSON

Maybe the two drivers who run him over will pay, whoever the hell they were!

TONY

You can pay when you pick up Daddy's ashes tomorrow after ten AM. Daddy be hotter than Hades an hour from now.

Mrs. Wilson screams and pulls Tony's half-tuxedo off as the Velcro rips apart behind Tony's neck.

TONY (CONT'D)

Ow! That's gonna leave a mark!

Mrs. Wilson is ready to punch Tony, as her sons, four large African-American men exit the station wagon.

Jamal races to the cashier's window and pulls Tony back.

JAMAL

Look, we're sorry for your loss, but we're about to save you at least fifteen-hundred dollars of cremation expenses.

Mrs. Wilson looks back at her four big sons. They shrug.

Mrs. Wilson throws the tuxedo costume in the open window at Tony.

MRS. WILSON

Does Daddy get a nice urn?

TONY

During our Grand Opening, we have a special on the Deluxe Apollo-G-for-Grecian Urn for only \$49.95.

Jamal steps in front of Tony, and smiles.

JAMAL

We'll throw him in the urn at no additional cost.

(beat)

That'll be \$499. Credit card?

Mrs. Wilson nods her head, and one of the big men steps forward, with a wad of money and flips out five \$100-bills.

Mrs. Wilson mumbles as she returns to the car.

MRS. WILSON

Should have dumped his ass in the river.

Jamal waves and smiles.

JAMAL

Cash is fine. See you at ten AM tomorrow.

Huan and Kelli remove and hang up their tuxedo costumes.

KELLI

Our first satisfied customer!

HUAN

Satisfied?

Tony races over to Kelli, Huan, and Jamal.

TONY

You were magnificent. How was I?

KELLI

The dead guy didn't complain.

Jamal works the hand-crank to lower the casket to the floor.

Kelli pushes Tony back, and dives to the coffin.

Kelli reaches into the casket and takes off Mr. Wilson's gold watch. Jamal sees her and is horrified.

JAMAL

What are you doing?

TONY

He don't need a watch!

HUAN

They're right. Could slow the cremation down or clog the bone-crusher.

KELLI

Plus, it's a new suit. Help me get him out of it before we roast him!

Jamal shakes his head in disgust, as he turns up the furnace. Huan stands uneasily next to Jamal as Tony and Kelli strip Mr. Wilson with great difficulty.

Mr. Wilson is down to his underwear, as Tony struggles to hold him up from behind, and Kelli is removing Mr. Wilson's pants stuck under his feet.

They hear a loud KNOCK on the front door. Everyone freezes.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Jamal steps quickly to the front door to see DR. REUBEN RAMOS (50s), a distinguished looking Latino in a tailored gray suit, flashing an official badge of a County Coroner.

Jamal unlocks the door.

DR. RAMOS

Dr. Reuben Ramos.

JAMAL

Reuben, like the sandwich?

DR. RAMOS

No thanks. Just ate.

(looks around)

I'm the County Coroner. There's been a complaint.

Dr. Ramos pushes his way into the main room.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Ramos sees Mr. Wilson, Tony, and Kelli in a compromising position. Mr. Wilson is in his underwear with crooked eyeglasses on.

JAMAL

I'm sure there's been a mistake.

DR. RAMOS

(winks at Tony)

Oh my! Don't ask, don't tell. It's autopsy-tervy world, as we say.

(looks around)

The mistake was closing down the Smokehouse. Best ribs and fries in town. Reasonably priced. The St. Louis sauce was my wife's favorite. She used to put in on everything.

Dr. Ramos chokes up as he paces.

KELLI

She die?

DR. RAMOS

Caught her with a neighbor covered in sauce. She gave me the brush-off, cleaned out our savings, and ran off. She had a beef with me too. Said I was a bad Catholic for allowing cremations.

TONY

I heard they were warming up to the idea.

Dr. Ramos takes out a notepad from his inside coat pocket.

KELLI

So, if I got this straight, you wife porked your neighbor, had a beef with you, and now she's on the lam?

DR. RAMOS

Had our marriage annulled, too. Said I didn't cut the mustard as a lover, imagine that! But, as the County Coroner, I have to okay your operation or shut you down.

JAMAL

We were just about to test our new furnace.

HUAN

Didn't want the polyester suit to gum up the works.

Dr. Ramos sees the new furnace, and gets overly excited.

DR. RAMOS

Is this the new energy-efficient
European Betcher-Asher 2020 model?
Four a day at half the cost?

JAMAL

That's it. It's a lease.

TONY

Why buy it, 'til you fry it?

Huan steps in front of Tony.

HUAN

We're excited about the remains
consolidation features. Can't lose
your ash with a furnace like this!

DR. RAMOS

Mrs. Wilson was concerned about
your dignity and professionalism,
but I see nothing here to be
concerned about.

Jamal quickly guides Dr. Ramos back to the lobby.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

JAMAL

So busy. Two more customers back to
back. Trying to make ends meet. You
understand. Come back anytime.

DR. RAMOS

Let's hope there's no more
complaints. Three strikes and
you're out in this county.

Jamal pushes Dr. Ramos out the door.

JAMAL

No more complaints about us, I can
assure you!

Jamal waves as Dr. Ramos drives off. He has a worried look on
his face.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. KITCHEN/CREMATORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Jamal heads back to the group with a sad look. Mr. Wilson can't be seen, and Tony, Huan, and Kelli stare at the temperature gauge. It reads: "850."

JAMAL
What could be worse?

TONY
Missing dinner?

JAMAL
You three go. I'll watch the furnace.

HUAN
Bring you something back?

JAMAL
Sandwich and coffee? We have the Mignon viewing in an hour. Don't be late!

Huan shakes her head in disgust at Jamal, while Kelli and Tony giggle on their way out the door.

LATER

SUPER "15 minutes later."

Jamal sits at his desk in the dim light. He doesn't see Mr. Wilson slowly trudge up to him from behind. Mr. Wilson is in his underwear and his skin appears almost white. [All ghosts/spirits have whitened skin.] Mr. Wilson's glasses are crooked and remain so. He's wearing only one shoe.

Mr. Wilson looks very unhappy as he pushes Jamal in the back.

Mr. Wilson peeks up at the overhead mirrors, sees that his skin is white, and he SCREAMS.

Jamal turns, looks Mr. Wilson in the eyes, and SCREAMS!

Jamal falls off the chair, hits his head on the concrete floor, and loses consciousness.

INT. WALK-IN REFRIGERATOR - NIGHT

Jamal wakes to find himself tied to his office chair in the dimly lit corner of the refrigerator, with two bodies lying on wooden benches. To his right is MRS. BARBIE MIGNON (50s), a school teacher in an ugly print dress. To his left is MR. BARRY GOLD (60s), a short, mean-looking man in a gray suit riddled with bullet holes, and high-platform black shoes.

Jamal is stunned and frightened, as Mr. Wilson storms into the refrigerator and turns on the light. Jamal SCREAMS.

MR. WILSON

Won't do no good in here. Where's my watch?

Jamal struggles to speak. His eyes are wide open.

JAMAL

But...you're...cremated!

MR. WILSON

Newly cremated.

Mr. Wilson paces angrily.

JAMAL

Newly...cremated?

MR. WILSON

I'll be gone soon. Probably when my lovely bride picks up my ashes, but somebody's gotta pay! I'm angry.

JAMAL

A... A... Angry? 'Bout the watch? I can explain...

MR. WILSON

Not about the watch, you fool!

JAMAL

Your missing shoe?

Jamal looks around.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Don't know how that happened!

MR. WILSON

'Bout dying.

(yells)

(MORE)

MR. WILSON (CONT'D)

One day you have your wife, your kids, and friends all around, then BAM! You're dead! Or in my case, Ba-Bump, Ba-Bump, you're dead. Hit-and-run. Twice.

JAMAL

Sorry for your loss.

Mr. Wilson gets in Jamal's face.

MR. WILSON

Sorry for your loss! That's it!
That's all you have to say!
(beat)
Go ahead! Ask me a question!

Jamal is too stunned to speak.

MR. WILSON (CONT'D)

Go on!

Jamal looks from side to side at the other bodies, then works up the nerve to speak.

JAMAL

What's the worst part 'bout being dead?

Mr. Wilson backs up and ponders the question.

MR. WILSON

It ain't you punk-ass kids stealing my watch. I stole it first! Hell, my boys won't want it. They got smartphones.

JAMAL

Missing your wife and kids?

MR. WILSON

Hell, yeah. That's bad. You know you never gonna see 'em again.

JAMAL

But that ain't the worse part?

Mr. Wilson turns sad, introspective.

MR. WILSON

It's finding out that it's just over. Ya know, over! That's it! You done!

(beat)

(MORE)

MR. WILSON (CONT'D)
 Then this! No big funeral? No giant
 wake? No fancy party?
 (yells)
 Fry your ass in a Smokehouse pizza
 oven?

JAMAL
 That sucks!

MR. WILSON
 For you! You ain't seen the last of
 me tonight! I can tell you that!

Jamal's eyes open widely.

JAMAL
 Huh?

Mr. Wilson yells.

MR. WILSON
 And, I'm the nice one!

Mr. Wilson points to Mrs. Mignon.

JAMAL
 No, this can't be happening!

MR. WILSON
 Wait 'til you meet that bitch!
 She's got issues! Specially with
 men!

Jamal looks over to Mrs. Mignon.

JAMAL
 Our third-grade school teacher?

She turns her head and opens her eyes to glare meanly at
 Jamal, who SCREAMS.

Mr. Wilson points to Mr. Gold.

Jamal reluctantly turns his head to see Mr. Gold.

MR. WILSON
 Those ain't moth holes in his one-
 thousand-dollar suit! Mr. Barry
 Gold! Owned every fish and chips
 restaurant on both coasts!

JAMAL
 Mr. Gold, the syndicate fish
 monger?

(MORE)

JAMAL (CONT'D)
Everyone loves Goldfish and Chips!
Didn't they call him the Codfather?

Mr. Gold turns his head, opens his eyes, and glares at Jamal, who screams again.

MR. WILSON
One violent dude. You in big
trouble tonight! Big trouble. Big
trouble...

Jamal passes out.

INT. KITCHEN/CREMATORIUM - NIGHT

We see Jamal on the floor, looking like he fell off his chair and hit his head.

Tony and Kelli enter the front door laughing and giggling, while Huan carries coffee and a sandwich for Jamal.

Huan races to help Jamal to his chair.

HUAN
Jamal, you okay?

TONY
Dude, what happened?

Jamal looks around, worried.

JAMAL
Must have fell.

KELLI
Fell off your own desk chair?

Jamal races to the walk-in refrigerator, and swings open the door. The others follow him and peek in. Everyone sees Mrs. Mignon and Mr. Gold lying peacefully on the benches.

JAMAL
What the...?

TONY
Two more tonight. Piece of cake!

HUAN
(worried)
Coffee and a Reuben sandwich?

KELLI
You okay, Jamal? Look like you seen
a...

Jamal spins and points a menacing finger at Kelli.

JAMAL
Don't say it!

KELLI
All I meant was...

Jamal gets it Kelli's face.

JAMAL
We will treat the dead with
respect!

Jamal trudges to the desk and takes a bite of the sandwich and a swig of coffee. The others surround him with worried looks.

Tony pats Jamal on the back.

TONY
No worries, Dude!

Someone POUNDS on the backdoor.

Everyone turns and faces the door, uneasy.

Tony steps nervously to the backdoor, and yells.

TONY (CONT'D)
Who is it?

They hear a male's voice.

CHURCH LADY
Church Lady, from St. Theresa's Our
Lady of Perpetual Guilt Catholic
Church. Let me in!

Jamal, Kelli, and Huan have terrified looks on their faces, as Tony, grabs the door handle.

JAMAL, HUAN, & KELLI
No!

Too late. Tony swings open the door to see the CHURCH LADY (50s), a mobster dressed like a church lady in a print dress, short silk stockings, and a veil that conceals his eyes better than his five-o'clock shadow and facial scars.

Tony smiles, but struggles to speak.

TONY

I... went... to... St. Theresa's
Elementary.

Tony stops smiling as the Church Lady pushes her way through
the door.

CHURCH LADY

Grand Opening, huh! Drive-thru.
Quick cremations. No mess! We love
your business model.

JAMAL

We?

CHURCH LADY

Our... organization.

The Church Lady looks at the oven.

CHURCH LADY (CONT'D)

Lotta people don't want a big fuss.
They wanna be forgotten fast. Know
what I mean?

Kelli smiles and runs up to the Church Lady.

KELLI

We know exactly what you mean. Get
'em done quick. Don't ask
questions. We're a drive-thru!

The Church Lady opens the refrigerator and sees Mr. Gold.

CHURCH LADY

The Codfather! Paid us for
protection.

KELLI

His jackets full of bullet holes!

CHURCH LADY

Nobody's perfect! He owns all them
Gold's Fish and Chips Restaurants!

JAMAL

(mumbles)

Goldfish and chips? Who eats
goldfish?

CHURCH LADY

Roast Barry Gold now, and there's
an extra grand in it for you.

Jamal protests nervously, as he stares at the furnace.

JAMAL

Mr. Wilson isn't done with us. I mean, we're not done with Mr. Wilson, and we got Mrs. Mignon next at ten.

HUAN

We'll get to him right after. Will you be picking up the ashes tomorrow at ten AM?

The Church Lady pulls out a 0.38 pistol and points it around.

CHURCH LADY

Nobody wants his ashes! Got it! He was a fishmonger! Requested a burial at sea!

TONY

Burial at sea?

CHURCH LADY

You gotta john, don't ya?

JAMAL

We couldn't possibly dump him down the toilet. The County Coroner...

The Church Lady points the pistol at Jamal's head.

CHURCH LADY

Let me handle the Coroner.

Jamal nods yes. The others nod, too.

KELLI

No problem, Church Lady. Burial at sea. An extra grand, you said?

CHURCH LADY

And a lot more stiffs! If you take care of the Codfather, we'll take care of you. Know what I mean?

The staff nods 'yes'.

CHURCH LADY (CONT'D)

If ya don't, I'll shoot ya myself, and toss ya in that furnace!

The staff looks very worried.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. KITCHEN/CREMATORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Jamal, Tony, and Huan look frightened, as the Church Lady waves his pistol around.

Kelli smiles confidently, and points to the new furnace.

KELLI

It's the Betcher-Asher 2020. We can handle four stiffs a night, with our new energy-effluent furnace.

HUAN

Energy-efficient.

CHURCH LADY

Four stiffs a night? What if we got you more?

TONY

Like Chicago?

Kelli points to the furnace.

KELLI

We'll just turn this baby up? What do ya say, Jamal?

Jamal looks at the clock. It reads five minutes to ten.

JAMAL

Can we discuss this later? We gotta get Mrs. Mignon in the viewing window.

Jamal nudges the Church Lady toward the backdoor.

CHURCH LADY

No problem. I gotta come back to check on the Codfather anyway. People like assurances. Know what I mean?

Jamal nudges the Church Lady out the backdoor. He locks it.

JAMAL

We are not disposing bodies for the mob!

KELLI

Think of the money we'd make!

We hear a GUNSHOT, and there is a bullet hole in the backdoor above Jamal's head.

HUAN

May want to meet with that Coroner.

Jamal checks the clock that reads 9:58.

JAMAL

Two minutes 'til the Mignon viewing!

The team snaps into action. Jamal opens the refrigerator, but is afraid to go in.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Bring her out. I'll get the coffin ready.

Tony, Huan, and Kelli drag Mrs. Mignon out and place her in the casket.

Tony puts on his tuxedo costume at stares down the drive-thru lane.

TONY

Nobody here. Get it? No body here?

Jamal and the others ignore Tony, as the hoist the coffin into place.

Huan and Kelli slip on their tuxedo costumes as Jamal opens the casket. When he does, he sees Mrs. Mignon's eyes have popped open.

JAMAL

Super Glue! Stat! Ex-husband specified closed eyes!

Huan races to the desk and grabs a small bottle of *Super Glue*.

HUAN

What for?

JAMAL

Glue her eyelids shut. Old mortuary trick I read about.

Jamal applies the glue and holds Mrs. Mignon's eyelids down.

Tony yells.

TONY

Here they come. Places everyone.

Tony turns on his headset microphone. We hear him and the speaker outside at the menu.

TONY (CONT'D)

Great way to hide out as a wise
guy. A cross-dressing church lady
at St. Theresa's. Can you believe
that?! Who'd ever look there?

They hear a man's voice answer from the drive-up menu. It's MR. "PHILLY" MIGNON (50s), who we don't see, but we hear well.

MR. MIGNON

I would! Thanks for the tip. But if
the Church Lady ain't there, I'm
coming back for you! All of you!
(beat)
Oh, and tell my ex-wife, Philly
picked up the tab!

JAMAL

I'll get the curtains! Duck! That,
Mrs. Mignon's ex-husband, Philly.

TONY

(mumbles)
Philly Mignon?

A black car with tinted windows races by the viewing window. Everyone ducks, expecting shots to be fired.

No shots are fired. The group hears, but doesn't see a string of cars driving past the viewing window with the closed curtains.

HUAN

Sounds like dozens of cars are
going by!

KELLI

And they can't see a thing!

JAMAL

Philly paid in advance for the
cremation, and the Deluxe Apollo-G-
for-Grecian urn!

HUAN

This doesn't look good!

JAMAL
Coroner is going to get more
complaints, isn't he?

KELLI
Yelp!

TONY
Guess we still gotta cook her!

Jamal is distraught.

JAMAL
I'll collect and package Mr.
Wilson's remains. You guys can get
Mrs. Mignon primed for the oven.

Huan sees the look of depression on Jamal's face.

HUAN
What went on while we were gone?

JAMAL
I bumped my head. No big deal.
'Til...

TONY
You did see a ghost!

Jamal turns to the furnace.

JAMAL
Maybe I was just imagining things.

KELLI
Things like what?

JAMAL
The newly cremated.

TONY
Like the bodies they bring us to
toast?

JAMAL
Not exactly.

KELLI
What exactly?

JAMAL

Like, their spirits from the time they get tossed into the furnace, and the time they get picked up by loved ones in the morning.

TONY

You imagined you saw Mr. Wilson walking around, smiling, thanking us for all our hard work?

JAMAL

He was pissed off! Hated being dead. Hated being sent to our discount crematorium.

(angry)

No big funeral! No giant wake! No fancy party! It's just over!

HUAN

Who? What? This some kind of mental breakdown? What else did you see?

Jamal has difficulty speaking. He points to Mrs. Mignon with shaking hands.

JAMAL

She looked at me!

HUAN

The kindly old school teacher? So you glued her eyes shut. We know. It happens.

JAMAL

No, before.

The others look confused. Jamal points to the refrigerator.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

There! In the refrigerator! Her eyes opened and she glared at me. She's angry too. They all are. Didn't want to die!

TONY

Mr. Gold looked at you, too?

Jamal nods 'yes.'

Tony races to the refrigerator, opens the door, peeks in, and shuts the door.

TONY (CONT'D)

His eyes are closed now. And Mrs. Mignon's eyes were closed when we drug her out for the viewing.

Huan reluctantly guides Jamal to his desk. He sits.

HUAN

Wimp!

JAMAL

You'll see. You'll all see. Those aren't moth holes in Mr. Gold's suit, and Mrs. Mignon will be back! I know it! I feel her.

HUAN

(angry)

Ghosts are make believe!

Jamal stands and yells.

JAMAL

Common knowledge that Mrs. Mignon's ex-husband served time for bank robbery.

KELLI

Everyone has some tiny issues or another.

JAMAL

What if he's after the Church Lady?

TONY

Or our ladies.

JAMAL

What if Mrs. Mignon's ghost does come back. Or, Mr. Gold? Gonna get pretty crowded around here!

(paces)

We each had our reasons for trying to make a business out of this place. Tony?

TONY

I wanted to get into Kelli's pants.

Kelli and Huan are appalled.

HUAN

Ewww!

KELLI

Tony, our relationship is dead! Get over it.

JAMAL

Kelli, why did you sign on?

Kelli acts like she's shooting a machine gun.

KELLI

I wanna join the mob. Bam, bam, bam. Thought the Church Lady could put in a good word for me if we disposed of enough mob hits!

TONY & JAMAL

What?

KELLI

And I could go after gold watches, teeth, credit cards that haven't expired, that sort of stuff.

JAMAL

That's dishonest!

HUAN

That's disgusting!

TONY

That's a little twisted, but it matches the career profiles they did of us in middle school.

Kelli and Tony get excited, as they wrap arms around each other.

KELLI

I got either a flight attendant or a serial killer, and you got either a peace corps volunteer or...

TONY

An Elvis impersonator!

KELLI

Good times.

Tony and Kelli stroll away a few steps, and Tony presents Kelli with one of Mr. Wilson's shoes, and one of Mrs. Mignon's shoes. Kelli smiles.

TONY

By the way, I got you a couple of shoe-venirs!

KELLI

You swiped a shoe from each of them?

TONY

Gonna collect 'em all.

Jamal is disgusted with Tony and turns sad as he speaks softly to Huan.

JAMAL

My middle school career profile said I was either a businessman or that guy at the circus who follows the elephants around with a shovel and a cart.

HUAN

So, you ended up shoveling ashes. Big deal. I was supposed to be either a brain surgeon or Baptist Minister...

They hear a soft KNOCK at the front door.

Everyone stares toward the front door.

JAMAL

It's the Coroner! Kelli, stall him. I'll get Mr. Wilson's ashes in an urn. Tony and Huan, get Mrs. Mignon in the furnace.

Kelli races to the front door.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

At the front door, Kelli acts sexy as she walks up to open the door, just a little.

KELLI

Hi, handsome. Remember me?

DR. RAMOS

Vaguely. Is Mr. Curry here?

Kelli bats her eyes, and giggles.

KELLI

You don't remember Kelli? Kelli with an i?

DR. RAMOS

Kelli with two eyes?

KELLI

No, silly. K-E-L-L-I, instead of a 'Y.'

DR. RAMOS

Is Mr. Curry available? We received a second complaint. Mrs. Mignon was a very popular third-grade teacher. None of her third-grade students could see her in your viewing window.

KELLI

We all had her for third-grade! Trust me, nobody wants to see a dead body in that hideous print dress? And those wrinkles! She needed a good ironing if you ask me.

DR. RAMOS

You tell Mr. Curry, he'd better not get saucy with me. I have two official complaints against him. One more, and it's three strikes and you're out of business! Got it?

KELLI

Yes, Dr. Ramos, I...

Tony walks up behind Kelli to help her stall Dr. Ramos.

DR. RAMOS

Dr. Ramos, it's a pleasure to see you again.

Tony shakes Dr. Ramos's hand, then adds a few fist bumps, and bumping-elbow gestures for good measure, as Kelli departs with a sexy walk toward the back room, catching Tony's eye, but not Dr. Ramos's.

Tony whispers to Dr. Ramos.

TONY

Speaking of seeing you again, what can you tell me about seeing the newly cremated?

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

Just between you and me. From your lengthy experience. You ever seen ghosts?

Dr. Ramos is stunned.

DR. RAMOS

Tony, is it?

TONY

Yes, Sir. Tony Ruggiero. They don't have to be real ghosts. Ya know, dead people staring at you 'til you glue their eyeballs to their cheeks. Know what I mean?

Jamal races in and steps between Tony and Dr. Ramos.

JAMAL

No more complaints, Dr. Ramos. We promise. I'll handle it from here, Tony.

Tony walks bak to the kitchen/crematorium, catching Dr. Ramos's eye.

Jamal sees this.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

We offer an invaluable service to the community, Dr. Ramos.

DR. RAMOS

Yes, I had to approve your business plan for the city and county.

JAMAL

Why would people pay four-to-seven grand for a burial, or two-to-four grand for a regular cremation, when we can offer discount cremations for \$499?!

DR. RAMOS

Yes, I tell people that's quite a bargain, but...

JAMAL

Of course, you do tell them the Deluxe Apollo-G-for-Grecian urn is an extra \$49.95.

DR. RAMOS

I know, but the complaints are mounting, and I have the mayor breathing down my...

JAMAL

I promise, no more complaints, Dr. Ramos.

DR. RAMOS

Better not be, or I'll shut you down.

END ACT THREE

TAG

INT. KITCHEN/CREMATORIUM - NIGHT

Tony sits in the desk chair with his feet up on the desk. He reads a snowboarding magazine.

Huan sits on the desk going over the cremation schedule.

Kelli rests in the casket on the floor.

Jamal paces with a worried look.

KELLI

I'm sure those complaints were spurious.

TONY

Spurious?

Huan

Feigned, deceptive, misleading, specious.

Tony looks confused.

JAMAL

Bogus!

TONY

Oh!

JAMAL

But we're expecting smooth sailing with Mr. Gold. And we've met some very nice people, most of them alive!

KELLI

And a devout Catholics, the Church Lady.

TONY

Coroner, Dr. Ramos, seemed nice.

JAMAL

Slight mishaps are bound to happen during a hectic Grand Opening, but I'm confident that our sound business practices...

Jamal turns with a worried look as he faces the door to the lobby.

He sees Mrs. Mignon trudge toward him in her print dress, white skin and with her eyes glued shut, slapping a wooden ruler in her hand, and with a very angry expression on her face. She's wearing only one shoe.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

You all remember our newly cremated third-grade teacher, Mrs. Mignon!

Mrs. Mignon's slaps her hand with her ruler.

Tony, Huan, and Kelli turn to see Mrs. Mignon. Their eyes open and jaws drop. Speechless.

Mrs. Mignon races over to Tony and slaps the back of his head hard, and yells at him.

MRS. MIGNON

There will be no feet on the desks in my classroom, Mr. Tony Ruggiero!

TONY

You remember me?

MRS. MIGNON

You spent a lot of time in third grade.

TONY

(mumbles)

Best three years of my life.

MRS. MIGNON

(to Huan)

Do we sit on furniture, Ms. Huan Li?

Mrs. Mignon pushes Huan onto the floor, before turning to see Kelli in the casket.

KELLI

Geez! Were you our third-grade teacher or a prison guard?

Mrs. Mignon shoves Kelli's head down and slams the casket shut.

MRS. MIGNON

I'll teach you to be disrespectful, you tattooed tramp, Ms. Kelli with an i, Matthews!

Tony chuckles.

Kelli pounds on the casket lid before pushing it up.

HUAN

What are you?

JAMAL

I told you! She's a newly-cremated!

MRS. MIGNON

You may refer to me as Mrs. Mignon.

JAMAL

I told you about Mr. Wilson! Same thing! Believe me now?

Mrs. Mignon stomps around the room, as the others stare with curiosity and cringe with fear.

She stops at the furnace, and raises her ruler to SMACK Jamal.

MRS. MIGNON

Heard this discount crematorium was all your idea.

JAMAL

(like a 3rd-grader)
Yes, Mrs. Mignon.

MRS. MIGNON

(angry)
Then maybe you can tell me who killed me?!

Jamal, Tony, Kelli, and Huan look at each other, puzzled and it's the END OF SHOW.