

# DEAD GUY OPRY

## Words and Music by Ty Hager

NOTE TO READER: When WILLARD/JARED appears (separated by the forward slash), Jared is unseen by anyone onstage, but he's the one singing. Willard will be lip-synching.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

JARED WHALEY - The murdered country singer. In his forties, long-haired, scruffy.

ANGEL WHALEY - The wife/widow/defendant. Young and beautiful.

WILLARD BLEVINS – He's the poor, overweight, 12-year-old redneck kid channeling the Dead Guy.

MACK BLEVINS – Willard's Pa. Good ol' Redneck - loves NASCAR and beer, a little freaked out by his boy. 30's-40s.

ELENORE BLEVINS – Willard's Ma. 30's, meek, subservient.

HARVEY BOYD – He's the small-town radio newsman Dead Jared lures into getting the word out. Late 20's-30's.

MARSHALL LAUGHLIN – Angel's high-dollar Nashville defense lawyer. Kinda Fred Thompson-ish. Mid-late 50's.

HAYWOOD BRICE - The Prosecutor. Quiet and mousy, mid-late 40's.

JUDGE WAY – No-nonsense and fiery, in her 40's-50's.

AMANDA - The Other Woman. 20's-30's.

CHAD – Jared's lead guitar player, married to Amanda.

DAN - Jared's bass player.

MULTIPLE ONLOOKERS, BYSTANDERS, JURY MEMBERS, ETC.

### OVERTURE

#### ACT I

##### Scene 1

LIGHTS UP on JARED – he's a grizzled, graying hippy-type dude, dressed in a white suit and black dress shoes, sitting on a stage bare except for a chair, a small table, and a guitar on a stand.

TYPING is heard BG.

JARED

Some folks believe that when you die, you go to Heaven

Some folks think it's better up there

Some folks'll say that when you're dead, you're dead and

There's just no gettin' past the fact you ain't goin' nowhere

I don't believe no belief beats another  
I don't think thinkin' 'bout it's gonna pay  
I had my life, and if I had my 'druthers  
There'd be something more than nothing on its way  
'Cause nothin' makes a really long day...

He stops typing, rises, straps on the guitar and starts playing. TYPING fades.

JARED (cont)

Well I don't care 'bout nothin' minus nothin'  
And the old Grim Reaper's quite the special friend

The GRIM REAPER slowly walks across REAR STAGE, stops, stands quietly.

JARED (cont)

And if I may be bold, if the story be told  
I just don't wanna know how the story ends

Charlie Brown's gonna kick the football  
Broken hearts are maybe gonna mend  
But deep down in your soul, where the light ain't gonna go  
You don't really wanna know how the story ends  
Don't really wanna know how the story ends  
It's gonna end

Well we kinda got the Cliff notes, but without the when or how  
We kinda try to redefine just what the law will allow  
We kinda got a show to do, before we take a bow  
The curtain's gonna drop but it ain't droppin' now

I don't really wanna know how the story ends

He takes off the guitar, puts it back on the stand.

You don't really wanna know how the story ends

The Reaper exits.

TYPING rises.

We just don't wanna know how the story ends  
We don't wanna know how the story ends  
Let's just pretend...

TYPING reaches a crescendo as MUSIC fades.

LIGHTS DOWN

## Scene 2

TYPING fades as MUSIC rises.

LIGHTS UP on a living room, a recliner in front of a large-screen TV, a sofa beside the recliner, a coffee table strewn with magazines and an ashtray at the far end of the sofa, where sits ELENORE, knitting and smoking.

MACK enters, holding beer.

MACK

I like NASCAR

(pops top)

And beer

The only exercise I get is gettin' it from here...

(crosses to sofa, limping)

To here.

(plops down on sofa)

I like NASCAR

(picks up remote)

Those guys are great

(turns up volume, sound of racing)

Go straight take a left take a left go straight

Take a left take a left go straight

Go straight take a left take a left go straight

Take a left take a left go straight

Sound of racing fades.

ELENORE

I like knitting, it helps relax my mind  
I ain't kidding  
Sometimes it's the only peace I find  
Just a needle and some thread  
And cigarettes and magazines  
And I'll be the happiest country girl you never see

MACK

Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight  
Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight

I like NASCAR and beer  
I kinda like to lose myself in anything that ain't right here  
Elenore's cooks real good, but she ain't no fun bein' with  
(motions to closed door STAGE RIGHT)  
And our boy's less like a boy  
Than like a little bitch

ELENORE

Shhh Mack! Willard'll hear ya!

Both look at door.

MACK

I can't believe he's not shriekin' at one of his stupid video games

ELENORE

But you bought him that computer 'cause he was drivin' you insane

MACK

I traded all that whinin' for "BOOMS" and "KA-POWS"

BOTH

But he sure is quiet now

MACK

(back to race)

I like NASCAR, and NASCAR likes me  
Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go...I gotta pee

Mack rises and limps to bathroom. He stops at door and looks up, noticing the accompanying MUSIC. He sighs, shakes his head, enters bathroom, closes door.

We hear PEEING.

MACK (from behind door)

Really?

PEEING continues, wanes, stops. SFX flush. Mack exits bathroom, looks quizzically at Willard's door. Limpes over, puts his ear to door. Looks up, irritated at the MUSIC volume. MUSIC fades. TYPING rises.

MACK (cont)

I know I've heard that sound before  
Like squirrels in the attic  
But that can't be it

He listens more intently, his face reflecting his puzzlement. His eyes widen as it dawns on him.

MACK (cont)

Goddamn it Elenore!  
I think Willard's in there goddamn typing!

ELENORE

(stands, shocked)

Shut the front door! That's not like him at all!

MACK

I said Goddamn it Elenore!  
I think our boy's in there goddamn typing!

ELENORE

I know, I heard you, I said that's not like him at all

She lays down her knitting and crosses to Mack.

BOTH

Not like him at all...

They listen at the closed door as TYPING fades.

MACK

Well we ain't real educated, ain't had too many chances

ELENORE

Our fam'ly tree ain't exactly overrun with branches

MACK

It was one thing when that gizmo was more like a toy

MUSIC fades, TYPING rises.

BOTH

I just don't know what's got into our little boy

ELENORE

Maybe he's just playin', pretending that he's writing

MACK

I hear what you're saying, that has to be it

ELENORE

He's sure doing it quickly, no way he could have learned

Mack looks at the TV, frowns.

MACK

Dammit, I just missed the part where the guy crashed and burned

ELENORE

There's got to be an explanation

BOTH

Let's bring this mystery to an end

Mack flings open door, LIGHTS UP on WILLARD, sitting in his bed, typing rapidly on a laptop, eyes straight ahead, trance-like. Jared stands unseen in the shadows.

MACK

(spoken)

Fuck a bird!

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shut the front door!

Willard blinks, notices his parents, slams the laptop shut, annoyed. Jared steps slightly forward.

WILLARD/JARED

I can't believe I fucking lost my fucking capo again!

MACK

(spoken)

What the fuck's a capo?

LIGHTS DOWN

### **Scene 3**

SPOT on Jared, STAGE LEFT, still wearing the white suit, standing beside the table and chair. He steps to a coat/hat rack, from which hangs a worn flannel shirt and old hat.

TYPING resumes in BG, barely audible.

JARED

Sometimes all you've got are the memories

Sometimes the future's in the past

He removes his jacket, revealing a crude t-shirt. Hangs the jacket on the rack, removes the flannel shirt and puts it on.

JARED (cont)

Sometimes lookin' back's the only way to see

A worn pair of sneakers lies beneath the rack. He picks them up, crosses to chair. He sits, removes his dress shoes.

JARED (cont)

Questions that were better left unasked

He stands and removes his slacks, revealing torn jeans beneath. Hangs his slacks on the rack. He sits and slips on sneakers. Stands. SPOT follows as he crosses to STAGE CENTER.

LIGHTS UP DIMMED on a BAR INTERIOR, PATRONS at tables in front of a small stage on which stands CHAD on guitar, and DAN on bass. There are a few more PATRONS at the bar, behind which stands the BARTENDER. All are still and silent.

Jared makes his way toward the stage.

JARED

Come with me to a time, things were dandy and fine  
And every sin we sinned was forgiven  
Man those were the days, just relaxin' in the rays

He picks up his guitar from a stand, puts it on.

JARED (cont)

Lookin' back, it sure seemed like Heaven

LIGHTS RISE FULL, Patrons and Band come to life. A banner reading *JARED WHALEY & THE COWTIPPERS* hangs behind the stage.

Jared sways a bit, takes a long pull from a beer, sets it down.

JARED (cont)

Now that was livin'

Shouts and applause from the crowd.

JARED AND BAND

Now that was livin'

Sowin' wild seeds with an imaginary need  
Now that was livin'



Now that was livin'  
Playin' with matches just 'cause you like the heat  
Now that was livin'  
Now that was livin'

Walkin' on a razor just 'cause you liked to bleed  
Drinkin' mind-erasers till you turn into a dream  
Some might say I missed it, but I didn't

'Cause I was livin'  
Man that was livin'  
Now that was livin'

Song ends to enthusiastic applause. Jared whoops drunkenly.

LIGHTS DIM, SPOT on Jared. Band and Crowd motionless.

Jared continues to play guitar throughout, slowly. He no longer seems drunk.

JARED (cont)

Sometimes all you've got are the memories  
Sometimes reminiscin' is a blast

SPOT on ANGEL, standing at a table near the stage. She and Jared's eyes meet, hold.

JARED (cont)

Sometimes there's that moment that changed everything

Angel holds her glance a moment longer, then exits out of SPOT.

JARED(cont)

Questions that you wished you'd never asked  
(spoken, slurred)  
Hey! What's your name?

Jared steps to bar, where Angel sits. Hands guitar to Bartender.

ANGEL

(spoken)

My name's Angel.

JARED  
Angel...that's freakin' perfect

ANGEL  
(spoken)  
Perfect?

JARED  
I'm guessin' it's meant to be ironic?

ANGEL  
'Cause I like drinkin' and smokin' and lovin' all night too?

JARED  
Good God in Heaven, I think you'll do

ANGEL  
I've got both your CDs, will ya sign 'em?

She hands him two CDs and a Sharpie.

JARED  
I'll sign anything that you want me too

He opens the CDs, signs them.

ANGEL  
I love your music and your style, but what really makes me smile  
Is your first tattoo

A COUPLE at the bar overhear.

JARED  
(smile and nods)  
My first tattoo

MAN  
(spoken)

His first tattoo?

WOMAN

(spoken)

His first tattoo?

BARTENDER

(spoken)

His first tattoo?

Angel smiles and nods.

ANGEL

(spoken)

It's on his first CD.

She shows them as Jared smiles, removes his flannel shirt, pulls up his left sleeve. Tattooed on his arm is **MY FIRST TATTOO**. In fancy lettering like that. The Man leans in, then looks up, smiling.

MAN

(spoken)

It says "My First Tattoo."

Bartender leans in to see.

BARTENDER

(spoken)

In fancy letterin' like that.

WOMAN

Oh that's priceless.

Onstage, Band starts back up.

JARED

My first tattoo

BAND

His first tattoo

BARTENDER

In fancy letterin' like that

JARED

My first tattoo

BAND

His first tattoo

JARED

It's a weird one

ANGEL

I've got one too

BAND

She's got one too

Man and Woman look at each other, puzzled.

MAN AND WOMAN

She's got one too?

BARTENDER

(spoken)

Imagine that.

ANGEL

I've got one too

BAND

She's got one too

Drum roll, all eyes on Angel.

MAN AND WOMAN

She's got one too

She opens her shirt, revealing her low-cut bra and a tattoo – it's the same tattoo as Jared's.

ANGEL (cont)

But it's a titty-tat

BAND

She's got a titty-tat

Man leans in, looking.

MAN

(spoken)

It says "My First Tattoo" too!

BARTENDER

(spoken)

In fancy letterin' like that!

WOMAN

That's priceless!

JARED

Well she's easy on the eyes, and she just showed me her breasts

BAND

She's got a titty-tat, she's got a titty-tat

ANGEL

Maybe later on I'll show you the rest

BAND

Not just her titty-tat, she's got a titty-tat

JARED

(to Crowd)

Well loneliness is desperate  
And desperation messes with your mind

He looks at Angel, staring back.

BAND

She's got a titty-tat

ANGEL

You know you can't resist it

ANGEL AND JARED

Fate finds its own place and time

Slumped at the bar, a DRUNK raises his head.

DRUNK

(a la Sylvester the Cat)

I tink I taw a titty-tat

BAND

She's got a titty-tat, she's gotta titty-tat...

SONG ENDS – cold.

Stage lights down. Band starts tearing down.

Jared steps forward from bar, addressing Crowd.

JARED

Sometimes all you've got are the memories

He looks at Angel.

JARED (cont)

I know things now I wish I'd known then

He crosses to stage, starts wrapping cords.

ANGEL

When you're ready to go, I'm here waiting you know

Jared finishes wrapping a cord. He looks around the stage.

TYPING rises.

JARED  
(spoken)  
God-DAMMIT!

All eyes on Jared.

JARED (cont)  
I can't believe I fuckin' lost my fuckin' capo again!

LIGHTS DOWN

#### **Scene 4**

LIGHTS UP on a Barber Shop. Mack sits in the chair, getting a trim from NORVILLE. Willard sits in a waiting chair opposite, typing, staring into space. Jared stands in the shadows behind him.

NORVILLE  
Hey Mack, your boy's sure actin' goofy  
Like some kind of un-dead court stenographer

MACK  
Fuck a bird, Norville, this shit's gettin' spooky  
What the hell's a court stenographer?

NORVILLE  
It's just weird that's all

BOTH  
It's just weird that's all

NORVILLE  
Hey Mack, have ya seen just what he's writin'?  
It could all be just gobbledy-gook

MACK  
He's huggin' the damn thing when he's not typin'  
And slams the fucker shut when I try to look  
It's just weird that's all

BOTH

It's just weird that's all

NORVILLE

Maybe it's just a phase, like zits or masturbatin'

MACK

(spoken)

What the hell?

He quickly shakes his head.

MACK (cont)

He's yellin' shit out in a weird voice though

NORVILLE

Aw, hell, you didn't tell me that

Definitely Satan

MACK

Norville, what the fuck's a capo?

NORVILLE

It's just weird that's all

BOTH

It's just weird that's all

It's just weird that's all

It's just weird that's all

Willard slams laptop shut. Jared steps slightly forward from shadows.

WILLARD/JARED

Almost every dime I get from that music shit's recoupable!

LIGHTS DOWN

**Scene 5**



LIGHTS UP on a dingy kitchen, Jared and Angel sitting together at a small table. Jared's drinking a beer, Angel's cleaning a pistol.

JARED

Goddamn it Angel, a vacation's just not do-able  
Almost every dime I get from that music shit's recoupable!

ANGEL

But your CD's climbin' up the charts, you're on the radio

JARED

But what the record label spent getting me there was just a loan

If ya don't know much about the music biz  
I'm gonna help ya out, gonna clue you in  
It's recoupable, recoupable  
All the money they spend on your great big hit  
Comes off the top, you don't get shit  
Till they recoup it all, recoupable

ANGEL

So you're damned near rich and famous  
But not so much with the rich  
This ain't what I expected

She blows through chambers of the revolver, begins re-loading it.

ANGEL (cont)

And I can sure be a bitch

JARED

(spoken)

It always makes me nervous when you do that

ANGEL

(spoken)

Daddy says always keep it clean. You never know when you might need it.

JARED (cont)

If ya don't know much about the music-biz  
All the promises, all they love they give  
Is recoupable, damned recoupable

ANGEL

Don't whine so much about your heavy load  
I know what you do when you're on the road  
THAT'S recoupable, recoupable

JARED

Angel, what happened? We were so meant to be  
You were love's embodiment, my reason to breathe

ANGEL

Jared, I'm sorry I just had this fantasy  
I didn't expect so many hurdles

JARED

Won't you come with me tonight to the show at The Thirsty Turtle?

Angel smiles sweetly, nods.

ANGEL

(whispers)

That'd be nice

JARED

If ya don't know much about the music biz  
Not a dime I get from playin' gigs  
Is recoupable, so they don't get it all

ANGEL

I won't worry 'bout the state we're in  
I won't shed a tear, 'cause I've got him  
Someday we'll have it all, misery's recoupable

JARED

Soon we'll play arenas and the money'll roll in  
And I'll be the man you dared to dream of

Angel rises, crosses to guitar leaning against a wall, brings it to him.

ANGEL

Jared, won't you play that song you wrote for me back when?

Jared smiles and takes the guitar.

JARED

(spoken)

Speechless?

Angel smiles and nods.

JARED

Anything for you, love

I could write a song, clean as a summer breeze  
Soft as a baby's cheek, fresh as mornin' dew  
And I could write a song about your Angel smile  
How you're the girl that I just can't believe is true

But I just write the words, the music's you  
And words don't even have a clue  
'Bout how you make me feel  
I might as well be speechless

I could write a song, maybe make ya cry  
With little thoughts that I just conjure into view  
And I could write a song about a lover's wish  
A song might get a kiss, might write about that too

But I just write the words, the music's you  
And words don't even have a clue  
'Bout how you make me feel  
I might as well be speechless

JARED AND ANGEL

There's a part of my heart always been achin'  
Empty, waitin', I think for you

And I just die when I look into your eyes  
And see what justice words could never do

JARED

But I just write the words, the music's you  
And words don't even have a clue  
'Bout how you make me feel  
I might as well be speechless

ANGEL

'Bout how you make me feel, I might as well be speechless

JARED AND ANGEL

I might as well be speechless

LIGHTS DOWN

### **Scene 6**

TYPING AND LIGHTS UP on the Blevins' kitchen table. Mack and Elenore eating, Elenore also knitting. And smoking. Willard typing and singing.

WILLARD/JARED

I might as well be speechless

The last notes rise as Willard mimes playing them on the guitar.

MACK

(spoken)

Well fuck a bird

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shut the front door

Willard hears them, breaks from his trance, slams the laptop shut. Silence. He sets the laptop down on the floor beside his chair.

WILLARD

(spoken)

Taters please.

Elenore starts dishing potatoes onto his plate.

MACK

Goddammit Willard, you ain't ever sung before

WILLARD

I don't know what you're talkin' 'bout

(to Elenore)

Please, could I have more

ELENORE

He's an only child, so I can't say for sure

ELENORE AND MACK

But is this something normally endured?

MACK

(spoken)

Norville says it might be just like zits or masturbatin'

ELENORE

(spoken)

What?

MACK

(spoken)

That's what I said

MACK (cont)

Goddamn it Willard, you're gettin' weirder every day

He picks up remote beside him on the table, points it at an unseen TV. We hear racing.

MACK (cont)

Go straight take a left take a left go straight

Take a left take a left go straight (x2)

WILLARD

Guess what? I'm gonna be on the radio

MACK

(spoken)

They got a radio Freak Show?

Willard shakes his head.

WILLARD

It's a field trip Thursday morning we all get to say hello

ELENORE

Honey, that's neat! I can't wait to hear your voice

MACK

I'd use the non-cussin' one if you've got a choice

ELENORE

I seen that DJ from the radio at the courthouse just the other day

MACK

(spoken)

That's right, they got that big murder trial goin' on

MACK (cont)

They shut down the Thirsty Turtle

I guess that singer had some sorta name

ELENORE

(spoken)

I think it was Jason or Jerry or somethin'

Wife shot him right in the head

Willard changes character again. Jared steps from the shadows and stands next to Willard.

WILLARD/JARED

Jared Whaley's who you're talkin' about

And if you get me a thumb drive

I'll get this shit out there

MACK

(spoken)

What the fuck's a thumb drive?

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken)

Shit. A little doo-dad looks like a thumb. Goes in a computer.

He/They motions to his laptop on the floor.

MACK

(spoken)

Damn, boy. You're doin' that shit without your gizmo now.

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shut the front door.

WILLARD/JARED

Well I ain't done too much talkin'  
Since I got shot in the noggin  
But I really got a lot to say  
I gotta lotta aggravation  
At this fuckin' situation  
At the cards that I've been dealt to play

Fat kid in a Redneck House  
Fat kid in a Redneck House

MACK

(to Elenore)

Elenore – you see what's goin' on here, don't ya?

ELENORE

Shut the front door!

MACK

Well I really ain't no genius  
But you kinda got me thinkin'

Things are kinda fin'ly makin' sense  
Ya started actin' creepy  
Like a zombie on the TV  
'Bout the time that feller met his end

That country singer done possessed my boy

MACK/ELENORE

That country singer done possessed our boy

WILLARD/JARED

I guess that maybe in about a little while I'll have forever  
Til then I got more important things I gotta do  
Gotta get a story out there  
'Cause I'm all about the truth  
Gonna use the tools I'm given  
Gonna be a fat kid on the news

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

MACK AND ELENORE

That country singer done possessed our boy

WILLARD/JARED

That country singer done possessed your boy

MACK

What the fuck's a capo?

WILLARD/JARED

I don't really wanna know how the story ends  
You don't really wanna know how the story ends

ALL

We don't really wanna know how the story ends

Willard becomes just Willard again as Jared slowly steps back into the shadows.

WILLARD



(spoken)  
Somebody tellin' a story? Cool!

JARED  
Let's just pretend

LIGHTS DOWN

**ACT II**  
**Scene 1**

LIGHTS remain down as we hear:

RADIO SPOT

(sung)  
Well Tony's Famiy Restaurant's the restaurant for you  
The food's great, the folk're friendly  
And they'll always wear their shoes

(spoken)  
Ya ever go out to eat, hungry for a satisfyin' meal  
Only to have your appetite ruined by the dirty bare feet of your server?  
Doesn't that gross ya out? Make ya wanna puke?  
Well, you'll be glad to know that since 1987  
The fine folks at Tony's Family Restaurant have been committed  
To not only serving you a fine meal at a reasonable price  
But to doing so with their shoes on!

So they won't picking up your salad croutons with their toes  
Or walking through your lasagna, or anything like that  
And they won't play with your food either – although you're welcome to!  
And if they do, say, tap-dance on your Salisbury steak  
Or juggle your French fries, the meal's on us!

Tony's Family Restaurant, at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> & McMurray  
Where, when we say "Shirts and Shoes Required,"  
We mean US too!

(sung)  
Well Tony's Famiy Restaurant's the restaurant for you  
The food's great, the folk're friendly

And they'll always wear their shoes

As the spot ends, LIGHTS UP on HARVEY BOYD, STAGE LEFT. He's behind a radio mic, computer monitors to either side, touching each screen, then turning to a laptop and typing. He turns back to the mic, puts on a set of headphones and touches a screen again. We hear:

RADIO JINGLE

Get rid of your blues, it's time for the news  
With Harvey Boyd!  
On W-T-O-R...

Harvey touches a monitor screen and an ON-AIR light above his head goes on.

HARVEY

Murder  
That's what's on everybody's minds  
Murder  
Ratings have never been so high  
A trial  
Better than a TV show  
And here's the things you need to know:

We got the biggest baddest Nashville lawyer money allows  
'Cause Angel Whaley's daddy went and sold his house  
If there's a TV camera well you know Laughlin's around  
Proclaiming she didn't do it

SPOT UP on MARSHALL LAUGHLIN, standing APRON RIGHT, behind a podium. He's immaculately-dressed, exuding an air of power and confidence.

LAUGHLIN

The Prosecution thinks they've got an easy road  
What with the motive and ballistics and the so-and-so  
But just a tiny seed of doubt's all I need to grow  
And I'm damned sure gonna sow it

(spoken)

We've got DNA evidence there was another woman besides  
Angel in that dressing room. Not a single piece of the State's  
evidence is overwhelming enough to diminish the power of that  
single fact!

SPOT UP on HAYWOOD BRICE, also at a podium, standing near Laughlin. He is the Defense Attorney's antithesis. Slight of build, rumped suit, hair in disarray.

BRICE

(spoken, barely above a whisper)

Guilty...

VOICES (OS)

(spoken)

What? Prosecutor Brice, we can't hear you!

BRICE

(louder)

Guilty!

Plain as the nose on your face

She did it!

Fingerprints all over the place

We'll prove it!

The jury won't be able to resist

HARVEY

We'll be right back with more after this

SPOTS DOWN on Laughlin and Brice. Harvey touches a screen, then another, then back to the laptop. He briefly types, then clicks a mouse.

HARVEY (cont)

Well I'm a man of many hats

They call me the Voice of Wilson County

Nothing wrong with that

I don't mind playing songs and writing ads

But there's a yearning that I have

Not a choice, but a force deep down inside me

That really doesn't like the place I'm at

And thinks this murder trial might be my chance

To show the whole world I'm the man

I was meant to be

He shuts the laptop and crosses from behind the broadcast console.

HARVEY (cont)

I don't want to be the country star  
Gets shot in the head at a redneck bar  
But I damned sure want to be the guy  
Who spills it  
I don't want to be that girl in black  
Either devastated, or just an actress  
I just want to be the guy  
From whom you heard it

All in all I'd rather  
Fucking be Dan Rather

A STYLIST, TV DIRECTOR, and CAMERAMAN enter as an Anchor Desk and Chair are rolled onstage. Harvey sits, the Stylist touches up his hair.

HARVEY (cont)

I want to be the guy you turn to  
When your world's in disarray  
I want my face in your living room  
Most every single day

STYLIST, DIRECTOR, CAMERAMAN

All in all he'd rather  
Fucking be Dan Rather

HARVEY

I want to be the guy who asks the  
Questions no one dares to ask

S/D/C

He wants to tell you there were no survivors  
In the latest airline crash

HARVEY

All in all I'd rather  
Fucking be Dan Rather

S/D/C

All in all he'd rather  
Fucking be Dan Rather

Enter RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST

Harvey I don't mean to burst your bubble at all  
But your 9 o'clock's arrived,  
They're waiting in the hall

KIDS (OS)

All in all we'd rather  
Not listen to you blather

HARVEY

As if there's not enough for me to do  
There's a goddamned field trip coming through  
I really just want to do the news  
In peace

KIDS file in, followed by TEACHER, as Harvey returns to microphone, puts on his headphones.

HARVEY (cont)

All in all I'd rather  
Freakin' be Dan Rather

KIDS AND TEACHER

All in all we'd rather  
You fucking were Dan Rather

KID

(spoken)

Who's Dan Rather?

Harvey flips switch, ON-AIR light flashes on.

HARVEY

I've never been so happy to be back

The trial

Just wrapped up its second day  
An expert  
Testified of DNA  
The jury  
Was shocked by what they heard next  
The gunshot closely followed oral sex

SPOT on Witness Booth APRON LEFT, where sits WITNESS 1.

WITNESS 1

The saliva on his penis was a different strain  
Than the Defendant's or his own, that would be real strange  
His pants around his ankles and his splattered brains  
Made one hell of a crime scene

LITTLE GIRL raises her hand.

LITTLE GIRL

(spoken)

What's oral sex?

A pause as Harvey and the Witness look at one another uncomfortably.

Laughlin steps forward and questions the Witness.

LAUGHLIN

But none of the physical evidence shows  
That the same mystery woman didn't also blow  
The head off the victim, maybe in the throes  
Of post-oral-coital psychopathy?

WITNESS 1

(spoken)

Um...what? No...I guess not.

HARVEY

Laughlin  
On cross-examination  
Sowing  
Those seeds of doubt he finds so fun

The Prosecution  
Wraps up its case later this week  
Will we hear the Defendant speak?  
We've got your Farm Report coming up next

ON AIR light goes off.

Harvey removes his headphones, pushes some buttons.

HARVEY (cont)  
Okay kids, I've got a few minutes  
Won't you gather 'round and ask your questions  
I can tell 'bout my job and everything that goes in it  
Just ask me

LITTLE BOY raises his hand.

LITTLE BOY  
Why would a guy have saliva on his penis?

KIDS titter.

Little Girl raises her hand.

LITTLE GIRL  
What's post-oral-coital psychopathy?

Willard, clutching his own lap-top to his bosom, points at Harveys.

WILLARD  
What do you do with your gizmo there?  
Please tell me

Harvey looks at first two Kids, then at Willard.

HARVEY  
Well, gosh, it seems I've just got time for one question  
That's the laptop I use to write the news  
What's yours for? If you don't mind me asking

Willard looks at his laptop, then back at Harvey. Kids giggle.

WILLARD

Beats me

There's a pause.

HARVEY

Let's go  
To the offices upstairs  
Meet the Boss-Man  
You're just so cute I want to share

Teacher begins herding the students.

TEACHER

Come on kids  
Mr. Boyd knows where to go  
Let's form a line and keep your voices low

The Kids line up, Harvey walks from behind console and walks toward EXIT LEFT.

HARVEY

(to Audience)

All in all I'd rather  
Fucking be Dan Rather

KIDS

All in all we'd rather  
Be texting one another

Harvey leads the group offstage, Willard trailing, then stopping.

WILLARD

I don't really know what I'm doin' here  
Sometimes I lose the time  
Why ain't I followin' the line?

Willard suddenly changes demeanor, back to one of his trances. He crosses to the radio console, turns Harvey's open laptop to face him. He removes a thumb drive from his pocket.



WILLARD/JARED (cont)

All in all I'd rather  
He fucking was Dan Rather

He inserts the thumb drive into Harvey's computer, clicks a couple of times, then scans over what's on the screen.

The Teacher pokes her head in the door and sees him.

TEACHER

Willard!

Willard quickly closes the laptop and whirls around.

WILLARD

(spoken as a boy again)

Nothin'.

The Teacher crosses to him and pulls him away. He reaches behind him and attempts but fails to retrieve the thumb drive. They exit.

LIGHTS DOWN

## Scene 2

LIGHTS UP APRON RIGHT. Jared, again dressed in white.

JARED

Got a disenchanting mirror hangin' on the wall  
And I can only see behind me

He rises, crosses to the hat rack.

JARED (cont)

But that don't hardly bother me at all  
'Cause I know it won't blind me  
And it's fun to sight-see

He removes his jacket, puts on the flannel shirt. He kicks off his shoes, begins to remove the pants, blue jeans beneath.

He stumbles, cusses, falls. Cusses some more. Gets the pants removed, throws them angrily off-stage. Crosses back to chair, starts to put on sneakers, mutters "Fuck it," rises and crosses to guitar stand puts on the guitar, and grabs his hat.

LIGHTS UP on the Thirsty Turtle Green Room. Chad and Dan are standing, holding their instruments. Seated on a sofa, at opposite ends, are Angel and AMANDA. On an end table closest Amanda sits a bong, beer bottles, and a bottle of whiskey.

Jared enters playing, pauses at the table to take a shot of whiskey, sits on the sofa between the two women.

JARED (cont)

We gotta little show to do, it's gonna be a blast  
But we've got an hour or two, Amanda's got the grass

Amanda smile and holds up bag.

JARED (cont)

It's just like back in college, still barely gettin' by

Amanda surreptitiously rubs Jared's thigh, leans into his ear and whispers. Angel notices, scowling. Jared rises.

JARED (cont)

But we're high high high high high high high

Amanda rises, dancing to Jared. She puts her arms on his shoulders, they look into one another's eyes.

ALL

High high high high high high high

Amanda dances away from Jared, sits, grabs her bag and the bong.

CHAD

Funny after all these years ol' Jared hasn't changed

Jared dances back to Amanda.

CHAD (cont)

He'd prob'ly do my girlfriend here, if it could be arranged

Jared stands in front of Amanda. Thrusts his hips.

DAN

It seems he's getting bolder  
Maybe Angel doesn't mind

All eyes turn to Angel.

ANGEL

(spoken)

Oh, she minds

JARED

(spoken)

Aw, honey, you know I don't mean no harm

Amanda grabs his ass. He turns to her, smiles and winks.

JARED (cont)

Man, I'm high high high high high high high

ALL

High high high high high high high

LIGHTS DOWN, SPOT UP on Angel as she rises and walks FRONT.

ANGEL

Maybe if I changed some things  
Made him feel more like a king  
Maybe then he'd notice me  
And not the other ones

Amanda rises, joins Angel as spot widens.

AMANDA

Maybe I can make him smile  
Only for a little while  
He's a crazy grown-up trouble child  
Pretending that it's fun

BOTH

Ooh ooh what's a lonely girl to do?  
Ooh ooh is there any getting through?  
Ooh ooh I'm about to come unglued  
Ooh ooh what's a lonely girl to do?

JARED

(spoken)

Hello there?

SPOT moves to Jared.

JARED (cont)

I'm right here, with a suggestion  
A simple answer to a complex question

SPOT moves to Chad and Dan as they play opening riff.

LIGHTS UP as Jared rises and steps FRONT CENTER.

JARED AND BAND

Hey girls, listen hard, if you wanna sure way to your man's heart  
Don't be prude, don't be a snob  
Do the Pecker Bob

ANGEL AND AMANDA

(spoken)

You're drunk!

JARED AND BAND

It's been around, they say it's true  
Since the caveman found out that the lips work too  
If you wanna make your man smile a lot  
Do the Pecker Bob

BAND

*DO IT, DO IT, DO IT, AAAAAH* (repeats through)

JARED

(Reggae-style)

Well they do it in the North, they do it in the South  
Lonely cowboys used to get it from the horse's mouth  
You can do it in the kitchen, you can do it in the yard  
It's really easy but you can make it hard  
You can do it with your fingers, you can do it with your toes  
But you'll get the best results right under your nose  
If you wanna make your man smile a lot  
Do the Pecker Bob (x3)

Angel stands angrily, her arms crossed.

ANGEL

Dammit Jared, I already do that

AMANDA

I do that too...

CHAD

She does that too...

DAN

She does that too

JARED

(spoken)

I know, it's just a fun song to sing

LIGHTS DOWN

### **Scene 3**

LIGHTS UP on Blevins' living room. Mack's watching NASCAR, Elenore's knitting.

MACK

Go straight take a left take a left go straight go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight

Mack and Elenore sing their following lines in unison:

MACK

Go straight take a left take a left go straight go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight

ELENORE

I like knitting, it helps relax my mind

There's a KNOCK. Mack rises and crosses to front door, opens it.

Harvey has a manila folder under one arm, holding up a thumb drive in the other.

HARVEY

Is there any chance there's something weird going on?

Mack turns to Elenore.

MACK

Hey Hon, it's that radio man, he seems to know our spawn

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shut the front door.

Mack looks at Harvey, shrugs, shuts the front door.

ELENORE

(spoken)

Figure of speech Mack.

Mack looks at her, shrugs, opens door. Harvey enters.

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shut the front door...please.

Mack shuts door.

HARVEY

(holding up thumb drive)

I found this in my laptop and I'm really quite confused

MACK

That's a doo-dad for your gizmo, Sybil's got one too

HARVEY

(spoken)

No...that's what I mean...it's HIS  
His teacher said he...never mind  
It's not the method but the madness,  
I'm more puzzled than annoyed

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

MACK AND ELENORE

That country singer done possessed our boy

MACK

(spoken)

What the fuck's a capo?

HARVEY

Do you have the internet? This stuff might be online

MACK

We don't need that fancy shit

ELENORE

Cable works just fine

Harvey opens the folder, pulls out two stacks of stapled pages.

HARVEY

I thought that you might say that, you live simpler than most  
(handing out the pages)  
So I read it to the label head, it was like he'd heard a ghost

MACK

(sitting)

That country singer done possessed my boy

HARVEY

I think you oughta read this, then let's talk to your son

Mack looks incredulously at the pages, then at the TV, then to Harvey.

MACK

But there's a Sprint Race in an hour, I'm not sure we'll be done

He and Elenore both look rather grim as they peruse the print-outs.

Mack looks skyward, referring to MUSIC.

MACK (cont)

(spoken)

You might wanna come down on the tempo just a smidge.

Music slows tempo as Mack and Elenore read.

Dim SPOT on Dead Jared w/guitar, APRON FRONT.

JARED

Some folks believe that when you die, you go to Heaven  
Some folks think it's better up there

I don't really wanna know how the story ends

She gotta titty-tat, she gotta titty-tat

I can't believe I fuckin' lost my fuckin' capo again!

Mack and Elenore, reading throughout, recognize this.

MACK

(spoken)

Fuck a BIRD!

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shut the front door!

MACK

(shouts)

Willard!



Willard emerges from his room, clutching his laptop to his chest, looking fearful.

Harvey places a calming hand on his shoulder.

HARVEY

Hey son, remember me? From the radio

MACK

And how'd your doo-dad get in his gizmo?  
Your mother wants to know

Elenore looks up from her knitting.

ELENORE

Remember Mack? He *said* he was gonna do it

Willard's bewildered.

WILLARD

I don't know what you're talkin' about  
I remember meetin' you  
But the doo-dad and the gizmo?  
Can I go to my room?

Mack thrusts out the pages.

MACK

And what the hell exactly is this shit?

Willard cowers. Harvey again tries to calm the boy. He reaches into his pocket and removes the thumb drive.

HARVEY

(spoken)

Willard, do you remember this?

In an instant, Willard's expression changes completely. The fear is gone, and he's a grinning scamp. He grabs the thumb drive.

WILLARD/JARED

I'm gonna need that back a spell, my story ain't quite done  
We ain't got to the juicy part – man, I'm havin' fun

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

WILLARD/JARED

Harvey, you know what you gotta do and who to see  
You need corroboration, you-know-who's the key

MACK AND ELENORE

That country singer done possessed our boy

Willard turns and starts slowly toward his bedroom.

WILLARD/JARED

Well they do it in the North, they do it in the South  
Lonely cowboys used to get it from the horse's mouth  
If you wanna make your man smile a lot  
Do the Pecker Bob

HARVEY

(to Mack and Elenore)

That country singer done possessed your boy

LIGHTS DOWN

#### **Scene 4**

LIGHTS UP on Angel in her cell. She looks through the barred windows, then at a picture of she and Jared taped to the wall.

ANGEL

Jail in Wilson County's a lonely place to be  
But it don't hurt nearly as much as why  
On the way to beautiful we detoured tragically  
And my eyes are the only ones can cry

'Cause don't look now, but you're dead  
I'm sorry I got angry, and that you lost your head  
I still recall the last words you said  
"Put that thing away" Now you're dead

You know I wasn't playin', you knew I had a gun  
You thought that I'd gone home mad  
And while I ain't sayin' my finger was the one  
That pulled the trigger, it still makes me sad

Laughlin and Harvey are let in by a GUARD, unseen by Angel.

ANGEL (cont)

But don't look now, you're dead  
Your smile's less disarming when it's full of melted lead  
Do you recall those words I said?  
"Put that thing away" Now you're dead

Laughlin clears his throat. Angel starts.

LAUGHLIN

Harvey, I'm assumin' this is all off the record?

HARVEY

I'm not here as a newsman today

LAUGHLIN

Angel, this is Harvey, he's found some sort of letters

HARVEY

More like a journal, really...can I call you for a date?

(spoken)

Did I just say that out loud?

LAUGHLIN AND ANGEL

(nodding, murmuring)

Well...you *sang* it...yeah

HARVEY

I found this on my laptop, I think you oughta see it

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

What is it?

ANGEL

(spoken)

Where'd ya get it?

HARVEY

I highlighted parts for you to read

ANGEL

I still don't understand...

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

On your laptop?

ANGEL

(spoken)

I don't get it...

HARVEY

I kinda doubt you're ready to believe...just read...

Both read.

A look of horror crosses Angel's face.

ANGEL

(shouted)

Where did you get this?!

LAUGHLIN

What is it Angel?

Angel holds up the pages.

ANGEL

I really liked his style, but what really made me smile  
Was his first tattoo

She goes back to reading.

ANGEL (cont)  
(spoken)

Oh great!

LAUGHLIN

What?

Angel sets down the pages, rises, and unzips jumper. She stands in front of Laughlin and Harvey, her back to audience, and shows them.

The men look at one another, wide-eyed.

LAUGHLIN AND HARVEY

She gotta titty-tat, she gotta titty-tat

Angel reads on. She looks up, unbelieving, terrified.

ANGEL  
(shouted)

Where the FUCK did you get this?!!

LAUGHLIN

Angel, what?!

She starts crying softly.

ANGEL  
(spoken)

We always fought about money...and Jared said:

(sung)

Goddammit Angel, a vacation's just not doable  
Almost every dime I get from that music shit's recoupable  
And then I said what it says here, and I swear it was all in fun  
But every time we'd fight, I'd always clean my gun

Laughlin rises, shaking his head, indicating the pages.

LAUGHLIN

If ya don't know much about the legal biz  
This is all real nice, but it don't mean shit  
It's inadmissible, and what's the point of it all?

He mighta written something on the day he died  
But what's the source? And will it help our side?  
Improbable, so this is no use at all

ANGEL

Harvey, I wanna know how this came to be  
I have so many questions, could you spend more time with me?

HARVEY

(to Laughlin)

Could you call the guard? I think I gotta pee

(to both)

Oh wait...it just gets stranger  
This was written in the last week by a  
Semi-literate sixth-grader

ANGEL

(spoken)

What the fuck?!

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Holy shit!!

HARVEY

I don't think that he's through with it  
This makes no sense at all, but I think he wants to tell it all

LAUGHLIN

Angel, won't you come clean with me –  
Will the truth set you free?

(to Harvey)

She's been no help at all, but this could change it all

Laughlin and Harvey both look expectantly at Angel.

ANGEL

Don't look now, but he's still dead  
I don't see gettin' rescued by some pre-teen redneck kid

LAUGHLIN

I gotta tell the Judge, just shoot me in the head

Angel shoot him a sharp look. He shrugs.

LAUGHLIN (cont)

Don't look now...

ANGEL

(to Harvey)

Harvey, could this work somehow?

LAUGHLIN

Don't look now

HARVEY

I've really got to pee right now

Guard approaches cell door.

LAUGHLIN AND ANGEL

Don't look now

LAUGHLIN

I'm not sure the law allows...

HARVEY AND ANGEL

Don't look now

LAUGHLIN

...my star witness to be dead

GUARD

Shot right in the head

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

I'm setting up a meeting. We'll need to bring the kid.

He motions to Guard, who unlocks and opens cell door.

LAUGHLIN (cont)

(spoken, to Harvey)

You still gotta pee?

HARVEY

Not really.

LIGHTS DOWN

### **Scene 5**

LIGHTS UP on JUDGE WAY, sitting at her desk, reading the print-out of a document as Laughlin paces. Brice sits to one side of the desk, with Angel, Mack, Willard, and Harvey seated in front, facing the Judge. Standing at a distance is the Guard.

JUDGE

I used to tell all my law students  
Never close your eyes to possibilities  
But never in my jurisprudence  
Have I so needed a drink

She drains a large coffee mug, motions to the Guard, who takes mug and exits.

JUDGE (cont)

It's just weird that's all

JUDGE AND LAUGHLIN

It's just weird that's all

BRICE



Your Honor, you've got to be kidding...

JUDGE

(spoken)

Huh?

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

What?

BRICE

(louder)

I said, You've got to be kidding!

This is all some bizarre fantasy

JUDGE

(to Laughlin)

I'm not even sure what you're asking

What you want us to believe

BRICE

It's just weird that's all

(to Laughlin)

What witness would you call?

All eyes on Willard, who clutches the laptop to his chest, staring at the floor.

Laughlin shakes his head dismissively.

LAUGHLIN

Just the writing is all

JUDGE

We must verify that he wrote it...

All eyes again on Willard, who clutches the laptop even tighter, frowning.

The Guard returns with the Judge's coffee mug, hands it to her. The Judge reaches into her drawer and retrieves a pint bottle, pours a shot into the coffee. She motions with her eyes toward Willard, the Guard takes a step toward the child. Willard clings to the laptop.

MACK

(to Willard)

Boy, you don't wanna go to jail over this

ANGEL

It's a lonely place to be

JUDGE

(to Mack)

Actually, as the parent...he's a minor...you can guess

The Judge's meaning registers with Mack.

MACK

(to Guard)

Use your gun if you need

Mack and the Guard attempt to pry the laptop from Willard.

JUDGE AND LAUGHLIN AND BRICE

It's just weird that's all

It's just weird that's all

Willard wails as the laptop is taken away. The Guard hands the laptop to the Judge, who opens it, takes a large drink from her mug, and starts tapping on the keyboard.

She takes another drink, searching the laptop's files.

JUDGE

This Doc was created last Valentine's day

At twelve twenty-three in the morning

ANGEL

Not long after Jared's brains got blown away

I can safely say not without warnin'

The Others look at her oddly.

ANGEL (cont)

It's just weird, that's all

LAUGHLIN

That was off the record, y'all.

Judge closes laptop, hands it to Guard, takes another large gulp from her mug. The Guard hands the laptop back to Willard, who stops crying.

BRICE

Your Honor let me get this straight, or at least somewhat clear  
You're thinkin' you might tolerate this sideshow we've got here?  
The case laid out by the State to a jury of her peers  
Hasn't come near bein' refuted

LAUGHLIN

Your Honor I appreciate the spot I've put you in  
But I don't deal the hands of fate, and this ain't about the win  
I've looked at all the evidence, and much to my chagrin  
I just don't see how it can be excluded

JUDGE

Now wait...do I have this right?  
You think he'll write about that night,  
And prove this whole thing's not just a ploy?

BRICE

Your Honor, we don't have the time  
No precedent comes to mind...

MACK

That Country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

That Country singer done possessed his boy

Willard clutches his laptop close, looks up at Mack.

WILLARD

(spoken)

Daddy...I wanna go home.

BRICE

Before this thing gets out of hand  
Is the defendant willing to take the stand  
And prove these words from La-La Land ring true?

All eyes on Angel. She looks at Laughlin, then a moment at Harvey, then at Brice and the Judge.

ANGEL

That's not something that I'm prepared to do

Laughlin is deflated, Brice and the Judge both breathe a sigh of relief.

JUDGE

That's it, Brice, good call  
I might get to keep my job after all

LAUGHLIN

But Your Honor! My client has her rights!

JUDGE

Mr. Laughlin, I feel for your plight

Judge Way hands her mug to the Guard, makes a "refill" motion. Guard takes mug and exits.

JUDGE (cont)

That's it, we're done  
I'll see y'all tomorrow, we'll have some fun

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

But Your Honor...

The Judge silences him with a stare.

JUDGE

You can't have your cake and eat it both

Laughlin begins to interject again. Judge Way raises her finger.

JUDGE (cont)

Someone'll have to swear under oath...

All eyes in the room seem to attempt to avoid looking at Willard, who sits sullenly clutching the laptop, staring at the floor. They're not quite able.

After a beat, Judge Way rises, followed by those who were still seated. Except Willard, who doesn't move.

The Judge heads toward the exit as Laughlin and Brice start gathering their things.

As the Judge reaches the door, Willard sighs loudly.

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken)

Goddammit!

There's a collective gasp as Willard smacks his left hand down on the closed laptop, then solemnly raises his right.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

I Jared Whaley do solemnly swear  
Every fuckin' thing I'm about to tell you is the truth  
I've handed you a miracle, but you don't seem to care  
Either that, or you're just real fuckin' obtuse

Angel appears to be in shock.

ANGEL

Jared? Honey? Is that really you in there?

Willard/Jared scoff.

WILLARD/JARED

Baby tell 'em 'bout the mole just above your pubic hair

Angel cries out and runs from the room.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

(spoken)

It's kinda shaped like a heart

LAUGHLIN

Your Honor, I guess this changes things  
I can't say I'm relieved  
But I guess it's up to the jury to believe

WILLARD/JARED

You ain't seen nothin' yet, I got more up my sleeve

BRICE

(looks toward door)

Um...I don't think the defendant's s'posed to leave

There is a shocked silence.

Judge Way rushes to her desk and picks up her phone.

JUDGE

(spoken)

Oh shit...

She starts dialing.

HARVEY

I'll get her, Your Honor

Harvey exits.

LAUGHLIN

Your Honor, I'll need just a couple days  
Gotta know what my witness has to say

BRICE

Your Honor, this charade's gone on long enough!

JUDGE

My God, the press is gonna be all over this  
Gonna open up a practice up in Anchorage

WILLARD/JARED

Judge, I think the voters'll eat this shit right up  
'Cause I'm livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so rough

WILLARD

(spoken)

Daddy, I've gotta pee

Willard exits.

MACK

That Country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

That Country singer done possessed his boy

LIGHTS fade, SPOT UP on APRON LEFT. Harvey catches up to Angel, turns her around.

HARVEY

That Country singer done possessed that boy

ANGEL

My husband's all up in him

Angel's and Harvey's eyes meet. They kiss. Angel takes a step back and unsnaps her pants.

HARVEY

(spoken anxiously)

No...we can't...

Angel shakes her head, slides the front of her panties down, but slightly. Harvey looks.

HARVEY

Oh my God, she's got that tattoo and a heart on  
Her skin

ANGEL

Play your cards right and I just might let you in

Willard appears behind the couple, Jared behind Willard.

WILLARD/JARED

I'm livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so bad  
And babycakes you know your fate is in my hands

Willard turns to leave.

SPOT DOWN on APRON, LIGHTS UP on Judge's Chambers.

JUDGE

(to Laughlin)

I'm gonna give ya two days, and then he takes the stand

Harvey and Angel and Willard re-enter.

BRICE

(spoken protest)

But Your Honor...

ALL (except Brice and Judge)

(spoken)

Huh?

JUDGE

(to Brice)

I know this trial ain't goin' like you planned

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

ANGEL

This man of mine done possessed this boy

Jared steps back into the light.

ALL (except Mack)

This country singer done possessed this boy

MACK

What the fuck's a capo?



WILLARD/JARED (sighs)

(spoken)

It's that little springy contraption that a mediocre guitar such as myself clamps onto the neck of his guitar to change keys without actually changing chords.

ALL (except W/J and Judge)

(spoken)

Fuck a bird!

JUDGE

(spoken)

See you in court!

LIGHTS DOWN

### **ACT III**

#### **Scene 1**

Far STAGE LEFT is the interior of a coffee shop, with several CUSTOMERS and a CASHIER.  
Far STAGE RIGHT is the interior of the bar, also with several Customers and a BARTENDER.

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

Did ya hear, did ya hear, did ya hear the news  
About the Whaley trial?

Gotta hand it to that Laughlin, that lawyer's got some style

It's already on CNN and all over the dial  
Fox says it's a prophesy, but I don't see that in my bible

FEMALE CUSTOMER

I don't know if this is a hoax for sure

ALL

But Wilson ain't a sleepy little town no more

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

We got an almost famous country singer, murdered by his missus  
We got the dead guy in a fat kid's suit, gonna be a witness

MALE CUSTOMER

We might just be a laughingstock

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Or we might become a Mecca

CASHIER

Right now we don't really care a lot

BARTENDER

'Cause are we makin' bank?

BOTH

You betcha...

Jared enters CENTER STAGE, through Customers. They seem oblivious to him, and go back to chatting and ordering.

JARED

Some folks believe that when you die you go to Heaven  
That may be true, but the jury's out on when  
I've got some truths to tell, but if that's the only reason  
I'll be damned if other truths I've gotta tell ain't gettin' in

The Bartender hands Jared his guitar, SPOT UP on Band.

JARED (cont)

I was born in California, but like many Californians  
I was raised in neighboring OK

BAND

Born in California, raised in Oklahoma

JARED

Yeah the winds, they'll sweep you down the drain

Bar customer spins on his stool, sings bass.

BASS SINGER

Sweep you down the drain

He spins back.

JARED

I was gonna be a clown, I was gonna be a rock star  
I went from Hollywood to Tennessee  
Where I learned to write a song and I learned to play a gee-tar  
Where I searched but never quite found me

Bass Singer spins back around.

BASS SINGER

He never quite found...um...him

Spins back.

JARED

Well I found a little love and she gave me little kids  
So I ran away to Austin, I kinda think I flipped my lid  
By the time I made it home, my family had run and hid  
When Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch  
Or was it something I did?

Bass singer does that spinning thing again.

BASS SINGER

You were a drunken piece of shit

Guess what he does now? He spins.

JARED

Sleepin' on the street, sellin' blood for drinkin' money  
Borrowin' guitars so I could play  
Lots-a shattered dreams, lots-a wishful thinkin' honey  
Lots-a songs written and thrown away

Spinny.

BASS SINGER

But a few turned out okay

A Female Coffee-Shop Customer turns around from the counter.

FEMALE CUSTOMER2

(spoken)

Um...music people? I've got to get back to work.

BASS SINGER

I think he's still got more to say

FEMALE CUSTOMER2

(spoken, sighing)

Great. Can you speed it up a little?

BASS SINGER

Okay...

JARED

(faster)

So I got back on my feet, made a lot of sammiches  
For country stars over by Music Row  
Played a lotta gigs, and nothin' rhymes with sammiches  
I fell in love and got my fool heart broke

BASS SINGER

So guess what? He had to go

JARED

Headed back to Austin, got myself a record deal  
A label from up New York way  
Who flew me back to Nashville, lookin' for that country feel

The rest of the Customers turn back around

JARED/ALL

May the circle jerk be unbroken  
Then I met Angel, but you know about that  
Then I cheated, then expired

JARED

I'd tell you more, but the fat kid needs a nap

BASS SINGER

He'd tell you more but the fat kid needs a nap

LIGHTS DOWN

## Scene 2

LIGHTS UP on a HOTEL ROOM. Willard naps in a chair, Mack sits in another. Harvey and Laughlin are both standing, Harvey peering around Laughlin's shoulder to read what Willard has written.

LAUGHLIN (reading)

I'd tell you more, but the fat kid needs a nap

Harvey opens his mouth to sing, but the Bass Singer quickly opens the door and pokes his head in.

BASS SINGER

He'd tell you more but the fat kid needs a nap

HARVEY

(spoken)

Thank you.

The Bass Singer nods, closes door.

MACK

(spoken)

He's just big-boned, like me and his mama.

Laughlin fumes.

LAUGHLIN

Goddamn it Willard, you little big-boned asshole

Willard leaps awake.

LAUGHLIN (cont)

Nobody gives a shit about what you did  
Before that final blow

HARVEY

Doesn't it lay a foundation of credibility?

MACK

All I understood was "lay," can I turn on the TV?

Laughlin scowls, shakes his head. Mack sulks.

WILLARD

Daddy I gotta pee

He rises from the bed, crosses to a bathroom door, and enters.

LAUGHLIN

If ya don't know much about the shape we're in  
We're fucked as fuck, we just can't win  
Unless he spills it all  
About his curtain call

HARVEY

Do you think it's wishful thinkin' what he has to say  
Is gonna get her off? Gonna go our way?  
Dammit all  
I meant *your* way is all

Laughlin looks at him suspiciously.

LAUGHLIN

It ain't just Angel's life we're trying here to save  
My distinguished career has got one foot in the grave

HARVEY

I wish I could say I had no ponies in the race  
Sometimes the heart don't break, but it bends....

Willard emerges from the bathroom. He ain't alone.

WILLARD/JARED

I know ya wanna know how the story ends

MACK

Seems like he wants to know how the story ends

LAUGHLIN

Shit yeah, I need to know how the story ends

HARVEY

I'd also like to know how the story ends

He looks at the room and smiles.

WILLARD/JARED

Well I once had a friend and he had himself a girl  
And I'm a covetous narcissistic SOB

MACK

(spoken)

What the hell's a covetous narci-what?

WILLARD/JARED

And since my Angel flew I thought I'd give that girl a whirl  
And like what goes up, she went down on me

MACK

(spoken)

Now don't be talkin' smut, son

WILLARD/JARED

And next thing I know, there's Angel with that fuckin' gun  
It was the worst kind of oral-coitus interruption

MACK

(spoken)

He didn't used to use the scientific dirty words

WILLARD/JARED

Well the girl under the table liked to pitch herself a bitch  
And she jumped up and they struggled  
And they scratched and they hissed  
And then there was a flash, but I didn't feel no pain  
I'd been relieved of that portion of my brain

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

I smell a victory, I could jump for joy

WILLARD/JARED

And I ain't sayin' that's how it happened  
But I ain't sayin' it ain't

Laughlin damned near explodes.

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Fuck a BIRD!!

MACK

(spoken)

Took the words right outta my mouth

LIGHTS DOWN

### **Scene 3**

LIGHTS UP on Judge's Chambers. Judge Way is reading while Laughlin, Brice, Mack, Willard, and Angel look on – Laughlin and Brice are standing, the rest seated around the Judge's desk.

JUDGE WAY

(reading)

And I ain't sayin' that's how it happened



But I ain't sayin' it ain't

She looks quizzically at Laughlin. Brice just shakes his head.

LAUGHLIN

Your Honor, I'm just askin' for a little delay  
While Harvey tracks down a witness we think might corroborate

At this, Angel looks up and frowns.

BRICE

He's actin' like the Sheriff didn't investigate  
Makin' a circus of an open-and-shut case

JUDGE WAY

I thought the kid was gonna name names

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

JUDGE WAY

(to Laughlin)

In case ya didn't notice it's a cluster-fuck out there  
We got satellite trucks and freakin' people everywhere  
I'm puttin' you on notice you got an hour I swear  
Or a goddamn mistrial I'll declare

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

ANGEL

There's a part of his heart always been achin'  
I think he's waitin' just for me  
Just give me five, let me look into his eyes  
He'll tell the truth and it'll set me free

Judge Way looks at Laughlin, then at Angel. She seems to consider it.

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

BRICE

Come on, Your Honor, this is pure lunacy  
Batshit crazy with no precedent I see

MACK

She ain't gonna hurt 'im

LAUGHLIN

It's our only remedy

The Judge rises, as does Mack. Angel looks at Willard with sad affection.

JUDGE

We'll be right outside the door...

WILLARD

I gotta pee

MACK

(spoken)

I TOLD you to go before we left the hotel...you can wait five minutes

(sung)

That country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

That country singer done possessed his boy

ANGEL

My dear departed's all up in this boy

JUDGE WAY

What the fuck? Let's go...

They exit, leaving Angel and Willard alone.

LIGHTS DOWN

**Scene 4**

LIGHTS UP on Amanda's and Chad's APARTMENT. They open the front door to Harvey.

AMANDA AND CHAD

Hello Harvey, we've been expecting you  
All in all, we're kinda glad you came

Harvey enters, shuts the door.

AMANDA AND CHAD (cont)

That Wilson County Sherrif can't add two and two  
And from what we've seen you kinda have a brain

Chad motions to a chair. Harvey sits, as does Chad. Amanda fetches coffee.

HARVEY

It's funny you should mention that  
I'll keep this underneath my hat

(to Amanda)

And you've not really been mentioned by name  
But Jared had himself a fling  
And it kinda seems you and he...aw crap...

Well you know what I mean

(spoken, to Chad)

Sorry...

Amanda sets down the coffee tray, hands a cup each to Harvey and Chad, sits.

CHAD

Don't worry Harvey, I know all about it  
I've known about it since that night  
I stand by my woman but I didn't want to shout it  
And ruin her alibi, bye bye

HARVEY

I hear there might-a been a struggle  
Just an accident went down there

AMANDA

I'm sorry that you went to all this trouble, Harvey

It all went down while I came up for air

Harvey's face falls.

HARVEY

(spoken)

What??!

AMANDA

I was on my knees prayin' I'd be spared

HARVEY

(spoken, still confused)

Huh? I thought maybe...then why didn't you...

AMANDA

I've been around a block or two, I've been a lot of things  
I've seen more than my share of altercations  
But folks'll do what folks'll do, and life brings what it brings  
And I don't really see the need for complications

When the bullets fly, ya gotta duck your head  
Otherwise you might find yourself dead  
Don't pay attention to what he said  
After the bullet flew

HARVEY

I've been around a block or two, I've seen a lot myself  
Car wrecks and explosions and crime scenes  
But I don't understand why you kept this to yourself  
When you could've cleared up this whole thing

AMANDA

When the bullets fly, ya gotta duck your head  
I knew she'd be convicted no matter what I said  
There wasn't any doubt until that voice from the dead  
After the bullet flew

Harvey *still* seems confused.

AMANDA (cont)

I don't wanna be that familiar face  
Known for bein' in the wrong place  
I'd rather be the girl you don't know of

I don't wanna be a celebrity  
Not known for talent but a B-J  
The girl whose ears the victim had ahold of

CHAD

She thought it'd be a bumper

CHAD AND AMANDA

Bein' famous for a hummer

AMANDA

To be known as that dumb hick

AMANDA AND CHAD

Left lipstick on his dipstick

HARVEY

When the bullets fly, you gotta duck your head  
But I think he might be tryin' to blame get her off instead  
Sow the seeds of doubt just like Laughlin said

CHAD

(spoken)

Maybe *he* just wants to be the one to screw the murdering whore...I'm  
sorry, too harsh?

AMANDA

(spoken)

I can't imagine the murdering whore would like that!

Harvey looks at a message he's received on his phone. He leaps up.

HARVEY

I think he might be in danger  
I think the boy might be in danger

The poor kid might be in danger

They exit.

LIGHTS DOWN

**Scene 5**

LIGHTS UP on the Judge's Chamber. Willard sits uncomfortable on a love seat, seeming to wish he could hide beneath the cushions.

Angel is lighting candles.

ANGEL

Just you and me  
An empty room, a closed door  
Just like before, before the world went crazy

Just you and me  
No distractions like before  
Can broken hearts be restored  
To doom or save me?

She sits beside Willard, looks into his eyes.

ANGEL (cont)

And it only took bein' without you to make me understand alone  
And it only took a second to get there  
From the top of the world to nowhere  
To here

She runs her fingers through Willard's hair. He flinches.

WILLARD

(spoken)

Umm...ma'am?

ANGEL

Just you and me

Fires burnin' deep inside  
You can't hide  
From what I know you're feelin'

And from what I've seen lately about you, you seem angry and alone  
And I'm sorry I helped you get there  
From the top of the world to nowhere  
To here

She rises, crosses to the door, dims the lights.

ANGEL (cont)

And I know that little voice inside you's crying out to just come home  
And it only takes my touch to get there  
Back to the top of the world we both shared

She crosses back to love seat, sits.

ANGEL (cont)

Look in my eyes and you'll see I still care  
Come to me, come to me

She tries to embrace the boy. Willard leaps up.

WILLARD

Hey now, this is gettin' kinda creepy  
But you're right, I just kinda wanna go home  
Hey now, you're a little too old for me  
But I'll sure tell my friends you tried  
Tell a little cougar lie

Angel rises and storms to Willard, standing in front of him, glaring.

ANGEL

Goddammit Jared! This is fucking unacceptable  
You're just playin' dumb but the time has come  
To un-dig this hole  
I told you I'm sorry for the part I had to play  
And if you ever loved me you'll make  
Everything turn out okay

Willard leaps up, possessed.

WILLARD/JARED

This country singer done possessed this boy  
This country singer done possessed this boy

ANGEL

Jared, darling, please forgive me  
The mem'ries of that night still haunt me

WILLARD/JARED

There's a part of my heart still breakin' apart  
Over you...

He touches her hair tenderly.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

But you blew...

My damned head off

LIGHTS UP on Band.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

Hey bitch, listen hard  
So you're sittin' in a cell with a broken heart  
I'd be hurt too, I'd cry and sob  
But you blew my damned head off

He turns away in anger. Angel, also angry, twirls him around.

ANGEL

Listen dick, you got your due  
How many times can I say I'm sorry to you?  
I mean it though, I swear to God  
But, yeah, I blew your damned head off

They dance during an instrumental break.



BAND (continues through)

Blew it, blew it, blew it, aaah

WILLARD/JARED

Well ya blew it on the wall and ya blew it on the chair

ANGEL

I can't believe she didn't get any in her hair

WILLARD/JARED

You popped it like a pimple, it exploded with a bang

ANGEL

As long as she stays quiet, they won't even know her name

WILLARD/JARED

Your fate is in my hands, am I a forgiving guy?

ANGEL

If you say it was an accident, no one has to fry

WILLARD/JARED

But she was under the table, just a-goblin' my knob

He smirks. Angel explodes.

ANGEL

THAT'S why I blew your damned head off

WILLARD/JARED/BAND

Blew my damned head off

BAND/ANGEL

Blew his damned off

Angel leads him back to the love seat, re-arranges some cushions. They sit.

ANGEL

Jared darlin', please forgive me

But I can't chance your testimony

WILLARD

(spoken)

Ma'am?

With both hands, she rips open her blouse, then tussles her hair, then grabs a cushion.

ANGEL

And it breaks my heart thinkin' about  
What I've got to do

She places the cushion over Willard's face, forcing him back onto the love seat.

He manages to momentarily push the cushion away.

WILLARD

Hey now, this gettin' kinda creepy...

She places the cushion over his face again. He pushes it away again.

WILLARD

She gotta titty tat...

She overpowers him this time, and his struggles weaken, then stop. Angel removes the cushion, places her ear to the boy's face, seems satisfied.

The door bursts open as she replaces the cushion on Willard's face, and jumps off the love seat, feigning horror.

LAUGHLIN

What the fuck are you doing to my witness?

MACK

Oh my God! My only son!

ANGEL

He tried to kill me, as God is my witness  
I swear this was my only option  
It was my only option

LAUGHLIN

Self-defense with a cushion?!

The Judge, Laughlin, Brice and Mack all gather round the lifeless boy.

BRICE

I told you this was nuts from the beginning

JUDGE WAY

He's not breathing! Call the guard station!

Brice rises, crosses to her desk, picks up the phone, presses a button.

MACK

(to Laughlin)

All you fuckin' cared about was winning!

(to Judge)

Please Judge, you gotta save my son!

Use that C-P-R if ya got one!

The Judge looks up.

JUDGE WAY

I can't find a pulse - don't let her run!

(to Laughlin)

I guess you got your delay

Brice returns to the boy's side.

MACK

(spoken, crying)

What'll I tell his mama?

JUDGE WAY

(spoken, to Brice)

Where are the fucking paramedics?!

BRICE

(spoken)

On their way! I told you this was nuts!

ANGEL

I said I was sorry!

BRICE

She said she was sorry?!

MACK

So what! You're sorry?!

As all glare at Angel, a voice comes from behind them on the love seat.

WILLARD/JARED

She told me she was sorry

Willard sits up, grinning his Jared grin.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

She gotta titty tat

Guess what? I'm back?

(to Angel)

You don't like that?

(to All)

Let's go to court!

LIGHTS DOWN

## **Scene 6**

LIGHTS UP on the COURTROOM. All stand as Judge Way enters, takes her seat.

Laughlin and Angel sit at one table, Brice at another. To STAGE RIGHT sits the JURY. Mack and Willard sit side-by-side on the front row of gallery seats.

BAILIFF

The People of the State of Tennessee vs Angel Whaley

Is now in session

All sit.

JUDGE WAY

Mr. Laughlin, would you like to call the witness everyone's here to see

And ask some questions?

LAUGHLIN

The Defense calls Jared Whaley

Brice rises.

BRICE

(spoken)

Objection!

ALL

(spoken)

What?!

BRICE

(spoken)

I said -

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Shut up!

Brice sits, as Willard shyly walks to the waiting CLERK, who holds a bible.

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

WILLARD

Daddy I've got to pee

MACK

(spoken)

I told you you should-a -

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Shut up!

Willard places his right hand on the bible and raises his left. The Clerk tersely shakes her head. Willard looks at Mack pleadingly. Mack motions Willard to reverse the positions of his hands.

OBSERVER

(spoken)

Boring!

Willard/Jared smirks.

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken)

Ah hell, I'm just messin' with ya

Excited murmuring from the Gallery. Judge Way bangs her gavel.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

I, Jared Whaley, do solemnly swear  
Everything I'm about to tell you is the truth  
I'll tell my little story 'neath the spotlight's hungry glare  
I'm more famous than a goddamned Baby Ruth

Willard crosses to the witness stand, takes a seat.

OBSERVER

(spoken)

That don't even make sen-

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Shut up!

MACK

That country singer done poss-

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Shut up!

(to W/J)

The witness will refrain from using profanity

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken)

Or what?

(sung)

I'm pretty fuckin' prosecution-proof

(spoken, to Judge)

What're ya gonna do - throw the *kid* in jail?

LAUGHLIN

Jared won't you tell us your story?

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken)

Be glad to.

(sung)

I was born in California, but like many Californians

I was raised in neighboring OK

JURY

Born in California, raised in Oklahoma

Laughlin interrupts.

LAUGHLIN

Let's not go back that far, what say?

OBSERVER (Bass Singer)

We don't have all damn day

WILLARD/JARED

I guess ya wanna know all about what happened

On the night I lost my head

It was a good day 'til then

But I had to be an asshole instead

And I don't blame Angel for the anger she felt

I cheated and I lied

But I didn't have a clue I'd draw the card I was dealt

Until it hit me between the eyes

JURY

Hit him between the eyes

LAUGHLIN

Be more specific, tell about it

BRICE

I wonder which story he'll tell

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Shut up!

LAUGHLIN

You said it was an accident

At least that's what you wrote about it

Angel shouldn't be in jail

BRICE

(spoken)

Um...? Leading, Your Honor?

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Yeah, kinda

LAUGHLIN

Cruel fate just prevailed

WILLARD/JARED

I always lie, and that's the truth

This thing I always never do

He looks at the Jury.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

But it ain't even me, it's you

Has to tell the difference

I gotta little story to tell, don't really turn out that well



But what the hell does if ya think about it

And sure, it sounds like it might be fun  
Two cheaters and a psycho with a gun  
But it ain't, and I'm here to testify about it

I always lie, and that's the truth  
But I'm the dyin' livin' proof  
Ain't namin' names or sayin' who  
Does it really make a difference?

When Karma comes callin', it can be a bitch

JURY

Be a bitch

WILLARD/JARED

When Karma comes callin', it can be a bitch  
In a room full of sinners it can take its pick

JURY

Bitch can take its pick

WILLARD/JARED

But when Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch

It can be a mean-ass dick  
Patiently, or really quick  
A shattered life or splattered bits  
Of brain on dingy curtains

LAUGHLIN

When Karma comes callin', it can be a bitch

JURY

Bitch bitch bitch bitch

LAUGHLIN

I feel I'm payin' for past transgressions  
And I don't give a shit which story that you pitch

JURY

Pitch pitch pitch pitch

LAUGHLIN

Karma's gonna make its own impression

WILLARD/JARED

Well that ain't very lawyerly,  
Angel she's countin' on you and me  
Come on, keep your dignity

LAUGHLIN

I only want the truth!

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken, a la Jack Nicholson)

You can't handle the truth!

He looks at the Jury, the Gallery.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

(spoken)

Aw, come on - that was a pretty good Jack Nicholson impression...

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

I think you *want* to tell us the truth! I think you *need* to tell us the truth!

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken – again – a la Nicholson)

You're goddamn right I do!

He looks again to the room.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

Huh? Anything?

Silence.

MACK

That aging actor done possessed my boy...

Harvey, Amanda, and Chad enter the courtroom.

WILLARD/JARED

When Karma comes callin', it can be a bitch

JURY

A nasty bitch

W/J notices the new arrivals.

WILLARD/JARED

I see we've added something to the mix

Well I was gonna be real nice  
Be Angel's savior, let it slide  
But now I gotta testify  
The damned bitch killed me twice!!

OBSERVER (bass)

E7

She freakin' killed him twice

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken)

And not ONCE was it an accident!

The Gallery erupts. Judge Way bangs her gavel. Angel rises, furious.

ANGEL

(spoken)

Jared, you're a fucking ASSHOLE!

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Twice?

WILLARD/JARED

(spoken, to Angel)  
What the hell did you expect?!  
Kill me once, shame on you - kill me *twice*...  
Well, shame on you both times

JUDGE WAY  
(spoken)  
What do you mean *twice*?!

WILLARD/JARED  
When Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch

ANGEL  
Don't look now, but you're dead

WILLARD/JARED  
Which presents its share of complications

ANGEL  
I'll languish in a cell, you keep the damned worms fed

WILLARD/JARED  
Gonna rid myself of these limitations

ANGEL  
I still recall those last words you said  
"Put that thing away"  
"I saw a titty tat"

JURY  
(spoken)  
What did you mean by "twice"?

WILLARD/JARED  
(to Judge)  
Just hold your horses, soon you'll know  
When Karma deals its fatal blow  
It ain't just the guilty go

He looks at Mack.

WILLARD/JARED (cont)

I'm sorry, Mack, this happened...

He rises from the witness stand, steps down, and collapses. The Gallery and Jury erupt again. Judge Way bangs her gavel.

Jared quietly exits as Laughlin, Brice, the Bailiff, and Mack quickly surround the boy.

BRICE

(spoken)

Oh my God!

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

He's not breathing!

BAILIFF

(spoken)

There's no pulse!

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Is there a doctor in the house?!

No response, as the pandemonium dies down.

JURY AND GALLERY

(a la "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead")

Holy shit, the little boy is dead

Which little boy?

The dead little boy!

Holy shit –

Judge Way interrupts with the banging of her gavel.

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

No no no no...that is just...no.

Mack looks up at Angel, still at the defense table.

MACK

(spoken)

What have you done to my boy!?

He rushes toward her, but is restrained by the Bailiff and Laughlin

JURY

Pray for the dead and the dead will pray for you

LIGHTS DOWN

### **Scene 7**

### **Epilogue**

LIGHTS UP on HARVEY'S OFFICE. Harvey sits alone at his laptop, listening to a recording of another ANNOUNCER's newscast.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

(spoken)

Judge Myra Way declared a mistrial Tuesday in the first-degree murder trial of Angel Whaley, accused in the shooting death of her husband, rising country star Jared Whaley. The proceedings were halted after the Defense's star witness - 12-year-old Willard Blevins - tragically collapsed and died moments after - as Jared Whaley - accusing the defendant not only in the murder in question, but also in the boy's death. Angel Whaley confessed to both crimes at the trial, but wasn't under oath, and has since retracted.

HARVEY

Some folks believe that when you die  
You go to Heaven  
That may be so, but I've still got Hell to pay  
I played my part, and a nightmare happened  
And hearts which once beat strong  
Broke apart along the way

ANNOUNCER (OS)

(spoken)

Preliminary findings from Wilson County Medical Examiner Roger Humphries indicate the boy died from suffocation, and – in a bizarre twist among many bizarre twists – that Blevins' body temperature seemed to indicate he had expired prior to his testimony.

HARVEY

I don't believe all things happen for a reason  
Nothing but pain will ever come of this

ANNOUNCER (OS)

(spoken)

Amanda Carlyle, the "Mystery Woman" from the Whaley murder case, has now stepped forward and is expected to be the prosecution's star witness in the Whaley re-trial.

HARVEY

And I fell for a psycho with a tattoo on her tit

ANNOUNCER

(spoken)

Angel Whaley remains remanded in the Wilson County jail.

HARVEY

All in all I'd rather  
Be a wannabe Dan Rather

Harvey's eyes grow heavy, his head nods.

Suddenly, he stares straight ahead and begins typing.

WILLARD (VO)

When I was twelve years old a dead guy taught me how to type  
Then his hot wife kilt me now all I do is write  
I'm not really sure how this story ends  
I ain't too good with words but I'll pretend  
Don't be afraid Harvey, you're my friend

LIGHTS DOWN

**THE FREAKIN' END**

All words and music by Ty Hager except excerpt from "The NASCAR Song" by Ty Hager/Steve Goodie and "The Pecker Bob" by Ty Hager/Stan Phelps