

Ambrose Bierce's
My Favorite Murder

Adapted
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Character

FRED

SUSAN

WINDELL

ZEK

AT RISE: WINDELL, ZEK and FRED
are standing on the stage looking
out to the audience.

WINDELL

It's was the craziest darn thing you ever did hear.

ZEK

He's telling the truth. It was crazy to the ears I tell ya,
hand to god.

FRED mimes "Mind Blown."

WINDELL

And the only way we know to tell this here story is to act it
out.

ZEK

Act it out the man said.

FRED strikes a dramatic pose.

WINDELL

And we're in luck because Fred here is an experienced
thespian of the arts.

FRED winks to the audience,
letting everyone know it's true.

ZEK

It's true, why I once saw him play My Fair Lady.

WINDELL

What part did he play?

ZEK

The lady.

WINDELL

That is range.

ZEK

It is, it is.

FRED takes a dramatic bow.

WINDELL

Whoa, tone it down a little Olivier.

FRED embarrassed puts his head
down a takes a step back.

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WINDELL

Well, to get this show on the road, why don't you start us off Zek.

ZEK

Well, I'm not a semi-professional like Fred over here but I'll give it the old college try.

FRED gives ZEK the thumbs up to encourage him.

ZEK/PROSECUTOR

(Takes a couple of breaths and then speaks.)

Your honor, having murdered his mother under circumstances of singular atrocity, the accused was arrested and put upon trial, which has lasted seven years. In summing up, in this fine Court of Acquittal I can only remark that it was one of the most ghastly crimes that anyone has ever been called upon to explain away.

WINDELL

That is some mighty fine thespianing there Zek.

ZEK

Well, thank you kindly Windell.

ZEK turns around to get FRED's approval and FRED high fives him.

WINDELL starts speaking catching the other two off guard.

WINDELL/LAWYER

May it please your honor...

ZEK

Whoa Windell, what's going on here?

WINDELL

I'm acting as counsel for the accused.

ZEK

You are?

WINDELL

I am.

ZEK looks at FRED and FRED shrugs as if to say, "Why not."

ZEK

Okay then, lay it on us.

WINDELL/LAWYER

May it please your honor, crimes are ghastly or agreeable only by comparison. If you were familiar with the details of my client's previous murder of his uncle, you would discern the offense of killing his mother to something in the nature of tender forbearance and filial consideration for the feelings of the victim. The appalling ferocity of the former assassination was indeed inconsistent with any hypothesis but that of guilt; and had it not been for the fact that the honorable judge before whom he was tried was president of a life insurance company which took risks on hangings, and in which my client held a policy, it is impossible to see how he could have been decently acquitted. If you would like to hear about it for the instruction and guidance of your honor's mind.

(WINDELL motions to FRED)

This unfortunate man, my client, will consent to give himself the pain of relating it under oath.

ZEK

Windell, I feel like I should be objecting at this point.

WINDELL

Well, if the feeling hits, there's only one thing to be done about it.

ZEK

Alrighty then.

ZEK/PROSECUTOR

Your honor, I object. Such a statement would be in the nature of evidence, and the testimony in this case is closed. The prisoner's statement should have already been introduced.

WINDELL/LAWYER

Well I object to your objection.

ZEK

Can you do that?

WINDELL

I'm pretty sure.

ZEK/PROSECUTOR

Okay then

WINDELL/LAWYER

Your honor, in a statutory sense, my esteemed colleague is absolutely correct. That in a Court of Objections and Technicalities that his objection would have merit, but this being a Court of Acquittal, his objection is well...meritless.

ZEK/PROSECUTOR

Well, I most certainly object to that and would ask for an exception.

A woman from the audience speaks up.

SUSAN

I object!

Startled, ZEK, WINDELL and FRED stop what they are doing and look at the woman.

WINDELL

Who in Hades are you?

SUSAN

(Nervous)

Ah, Susan, in for the weekend. Thought I would catch a show.

ZEK

And are you enjoying it so far?

SUSAN

(Ambivalent)

Eh...

WINDELL

And, your objection to my objection, to his objection is?

SUSAN

Who on earth are you objecting to?

WINDELL

The Judge.

SUSAN

What Judge?

WINDELL

The one out where you are.

SUSAN

I don't see any judge.

WINDELL

The judge isn't an actual person, but more of a theatrical concept we've created to carry the story along; it's artistic.

ZEK

Plus, it saves the theater a whole lot of money.

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WINDELL

But for the sake of moving things along. Why don't you be the judge.

SUSAN

Oh, I don't act.

ZEK

The same could be said of us, but here we are.

SUSAN

Well, what do I say?

WINDELL

Just say whatever comes to mind and let the scene take you where it wants to go.

SUSAN just stands there not knowing what to do. A couple of times it looks like she may do something but nothing happens.

SUSAN

What if nothing comes to mind?

WINDELL

Then just read from this.

WINDELL hands her a script. SUSAN thumbs through it.

SUSAN/JUDGE

Oh, like this part here--I must remind the Prosecutor that in order to ask for an exception, you must first get this case transferred of a time to the Court of Exceptions, upon a formal motion duly supported by affidavits. A motion to that effect was already denied in the first year of this trial.

ZEK

I ob...

ZEK begins to object but is cut off by SUSAN, whose gotten into the part and throws away the script in excitement.

SUSAN/JUDGE

Seeing that further objections are unwarranted at this point. Let the defendant make his statement.

WINDELL

I think we've found ourselves a natural.

We have, we have.

ZEK

Well thank you, I watch a lot of court tv and...

SUSAN

Ah Susan.

WINDELL

Yes?

SUSAN

You can sit back down now.

WINDELL

Right.

SUSAN

SUSAN sits back down.

I do declare Fred, you may have a run for your money.

WINDELL

FRED takes exception to this and walks to center stage to make his statement.

FRED/ACCUSED
(Very Dramatic)
I was born in Kalamakee, Michigan, Of honest and reputable parents, one of whom Heaven has mercifully spared to comfort me in my later years.

WINDELL and ZEK interrupt.

Whoa, looks like Fred brought his 'A' game.

WINDELL

Better watch it Susan.

ZEK

Fred continues

FRED/ACCUSED
In my youth the family came to California and settled near Nig...

Concerned FRED stops.

Why did you stop Fred? You had Zek and I on pins and needles.

WINDELL

You heard the man, pins and needles. Isn't that right Susan?

ZEK

SUSAN
(Ambivalent)

Eh.

Concerned about his next line.
FRED goes over to WINDELL and
whispers in his ear.

WINDELL
I'm sorry, can you repeat that? The town was called what?

FRED whispers in his ear again.

WINDELL
Oh dear.

ZEK comes over to see what's
going on.

ZEK
What's the kerfuffle, gentlemen?

WINDELL whispers in ZEK's ear.

ZEK
Oh my, we should probably change that.

WINDELL
You think?

ZEK
Most definitely.

WINDELL
Agreed.

(To FRED)
Fred, just change it up to something a little less
inflammatory.

FRED snaps his fingers and points
at WINDELL, letting him know,
"you've got it." FRED returns to
his original spot on stage and
gets back into character.

FRED/ACCUSED
In my youth the family came to California and settled near...
(Slight pause)
Blackhead, where my father opened a road agency and prospered
beyond the dreams of avarice.

FRED stops for a second and looks
at WINDELL and ZEK who gives him
a thumbs up.

Letting him know they approve of the change. FRED goes back to speaking.

FRED/ACCUSED

He was a silent, saturnine man then, though his increasing years have now somewhat relaxed the austerity of his disposition, and I believe that nothing but his memory of the sad event for which I am now on trial prevents him from manifesting a genuine hilarity.

WINDELL

That is sad indeed.

ZEK

It is, it is.

WINDELL

The man just wanted to giggle a little.

ZEK

But he couldn't.

WINDELL

Nope, he couldn't. Kind of makes you want to cry.

ZEK

It kind of does doesn't it?

WINDELL

It does.

WINDELL notices FRED looking at him.

WINDELL

Oh, my apologies for our external ponderings Fred; do continue.

FRED collects himself and continues on.

FRED/ACCUSED

Four years after we had set up the road agency an itinerant preacher came along, and having no other way to pay for the night's lodging which we gave him, favored us with an exhortation of such power that, praise God, we all converted to religion.

WINDELL

Praise his name.

ZEK

Praise it, praise it I tell you.

Again WINDELL notices FRED
looking at him.

WINDELL

Sorry.

FRED Continues.

FRED/ACCUSED

My father at once sent for his brother, the Honorable William
Ridley of Stockton, and on his arrival turned over the agency
to him, charging him nothing for the franchise or inventory.
The family then move from Nig...

(Brief pause)

Blackhead.

WINDELL

Good catch Fred,

ZEK

Yes indeed, could've been bad.

FRED snaps his fingers, letting
them know he's on top of it.

FRED then continues.

FRED/ACCUSED

The family then moved to Ghost Rock and opened a dance house.
It was called 'The Saints' Rest Hurdy-Gurdy, and the
proceedings each night began with a prayer.

WINDELL

Praise the Lord and lets two-step.

ZEK

I'm feeling the spirit in my feet.

WINDELL and ZEK do a little dance
with each other. FRED just
ignores them and continues on.

FRED/ACCUSED

In the fall I had occasion to visit Coyote, on the road to
Mahala, and took the stage at Ghost Rock, with four other
passengers. About three miles beyond Blackhead, persons whom
I identified as my Uncle William and his two sons, held up
the stage.

WINDELL makes like his hands are
guns and points them at FRED.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Stand and deliver!

ZEK imitates what WINDELL is doing.

ZEK

Yeah! Uh, Windell, what are we doing here?

WINDELL

We're robbing this here stage coach. We're Uncle William and the two sons.

ZEK

We are?

WINDELL

Yes-sir-ree we are.

ZEK

We'll I believe we're short a son.

WINDELL

We certainly are, aren't we?

ZEK

We are, we are.

WINDELL

(To SUSAN)

Susan, we're going to need you down here.

SUSAN

But I'm a paying audience member.

WINDELL

Yeah well, you're a paying audience member that should have kept her mouth shut.

ZEK

You could've, you should've, but you didn't, so now you've gotta join us down here.

SUSAN reluctantly gets up from the audience and walks to the stage to join WINDELL and ZEK.

SUSAN

(Mumbling)

Go see a show they said, it will be fun they said...

SUSAN joins WINDELL and ZEK, and ZEK motions to SUSAN to put her fingers up as if they were guns.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Stand and deliver!

ZEK/COUSIN #1

Yeah.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

(Looks at what ZEK is doing
and imitates him.)

Uh, yeah.

ZEK

(To SUSAN)

You're doing so good.

SUSAN

Thank you.

ZEK and SUSAN get back into
character and look at WINDELL
letting him know it's okay to
proceed. WINDELL then looks at
FRED and points his gun fingers
in a menacing manner.

FRED continues.

FRED/ACCUSED

Finding nothing in the express box, they went through the
passengers.

WINDELL, ZEK and SUSAN go to the
audience demanding money.

FRED/ACCUSED

I acted a most honorable part in the affair, placing myself
in line with the others, holding up my hands and permitting
myself to be deprived of forty dollars and a gold watch.

SUSAN takes the money and a gold
watch from FRED.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Boys, we're done here, mount up and lets head back to
Blackhead.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

Okay Paw.

WINDELL, ZEK and SUSAN pretend to
mount their horses.

ZEK

(To SUSAN)

See, isn't this better than just being in the audience?

SUSAN
(Ambivalent)

Eh.

All three of them ride off the stage, leaving FRED.

FRED/ACCUSED

From my behavior no one could have suspected that I knew the gentlemen who gave the entertainment. A few days later, I went to Blackhead to ask for a return of my money and watch.

WINDELL, ZEK and Susan are at a table playing poker.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

What? Robbed a stagecoach? Us? Never.

(To ZEK)

I raise you.

WINDELL puts a gold watch down on the table.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Really nephew, I don't know where you would get an idea like that?

FRED/ACCUSED

I saw you with my own eyes. I was standing as close as I am to you right now. You're even wearing the same jacket.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

Well, it is a popular style of jacket.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

Very popular.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

And you know how I like to keep up with the latest fashion.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

It's true, he does, he does.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

No law against it.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

If so I would be guilty as charged.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

Ha, good one paw. You're a funny man, don't you think so brother?

SUSAN/COUSIN #2
(Ambivalent)

Eh.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM
Now nephew, how do we know you didn't rob that stagecoach?

ZEK/COUSIN #1
That's true, how do we know?

SUSAN/COUSIN #2
The man makes a good point.

FRED/ACCUSED
Because I was the one that was robbed.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM
Well that's a convenient story.

ZEK/COUSIN #1
A little too convenient.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2
Seems kind of suspicious to me.

ZEK/COUSIN #1
That's true, it does, it does.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM
You wouldn't be trying to blame your misadventures on us
would you?

ZEK/COUSIN #1
Well, that's just plain mean spirited; isn't it?

SUSAN/COUSIN #2
It is; for shame cousin.

ZEK
For shame, for shame.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM
You don't see us going around and besmirching your character
do you?

ZEK/COUSIN #1
Nope, you don't.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2
No besmirching here, a completely besmirch free zone.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM
You wound me nephew, you wound me deeply.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

Someone call the sheriff, because I don't think he's going to make it.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

Why cousin, why do you hate us so?

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Maybe we should open our own dance hall over in Ghost Rock and drive you out of business.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

Maybe then you'll stop the besmirching.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

Thou shall not besmirch, so saith the good book.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

It does?

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

If not it should.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

That's true, it should, it should.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Now nephew, if you'll excuse us. We're going to remove ourselves from this unsavory situation you've put us in.

ZEK/COUSIN #1

I've never felt more unsavory than I have at this moment. How about you brother.

SUSAN/COUSIN #2

(Ambivalent)

Eh.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Nephew, good day.

WINDELL, ZEK and SUSAN take there belongings and exit.

FRED/ACCUSED

(To the Audience)

Seeing that further discussion was futile, I decided that it would be better and more satisfactory if my Uncle were dead. This may have seemed like an unusual conclusion on my part, but my Uncles duplicity left me little choice in the matter. Also shortly after this encounter the darnedest thing happened. Three men, strangers in that locality, were arrested for the stage robbery in which I had lost my money and watch.

Knowing the truth of their innocence, I endeavored to clear their names. Despite my best efforts though, they were brought to trial and hanged. This cemented my resolve, and in my mind now, the murder of my Uncle became a righteous cause. It was what my now late mother would have called 'a special providence.' And I have to admit the thought of this caused my cup of joy, to overflow on all sides.

SUSAN enters as FRED's Aunt and starts hanging laundry to dry.

FRED/ACCUSED

So the very next morning I shouldered my Winchester rifle and, going over to my uncle's house, near Blackhead, asked my Aunt Mary, his wife, if my Uncle were at home.

SUSAN/AUNT

Maybe he is, maybe he isn't. Why do you need to talk to him carrying that Winchester?

FRED/ACCUSED

Because I mean to kill him, sorry, I guess I should have led with that.

SUSAN/AUNT

Lord, if I had a nickel every time I heard that. Now Nephew, I'm going to give you a piece of advice. My husband tends to get on peoples bad side, and you're not the first to come up here with murderous intent, but he's still here, and you know why?

FRED attempts to answer but is cut off by SUSAN.

SUSAN/AUNT

Because, at their heart, people aren't killers. My husband though, is a little bit of a contemptible person, so our garden has blue ribbon tomatoes from the excellent fertilizer that these peoples inevitable fate produced. You should just go home nephew, because you just don't look like you have it in you.

FRED/ACCUSED

(To Audience)

Her points were valid, but being undeterred, and looking to show her my resolve, I leveled my rifle and wounded a Chinaman who happened to be passing by.

FRED lifts his arm like he has a rifle and shoots.

A yell is heard offstage.

WINDELL and ZEK come running on stage.

WINDELL

Whoa, whoa, whoa Fred. What's with the random violence against the Chinese.

ZEK

Seems kind of unwarranted, don't you think Susan?

SUSAN

(Ambivalent)

Eh.

WINDELL

Good point Susan, it was a different time indeed.

ZEK

That's true, it was. Point taken.

WINDELL

Seems kind of foolish that we came out here all in a huff.

ZEK

It does, doesn't it?

WINDELL

We should probably leave.

ZEK

You think so.

WINDELL

I do.

ZEK

Then lets get a move on.

WINDELL

Sorry folks.

WINDELL and ZEK exit.

FRED/ACCUSED

So...

SUSAN/AUNT

Yes, I can see your sincerity, but my husband is a horse of a different color. However you can find him over at the other side of the creek in the sheep lot. May the best man come out on top.

SUSAN exits.

FRED/ACCUSED

(To Audience)

Her well wishes may seem strange to you, but my Aunt Mary was one of the most fair-minded women whom you will ever meet.

WINDELL enters as the UNCLE. He gets down on his knees as if he's skinning a sheep.

FRED/ACCUSED

And true to her word, I found my Uncle down on his knees engaged in skinning a sheep.

WINDELL lifts his rifle as if to shoot him in the back.

FRED/ACCUSED

Seeing that he had neither gun nor pistol handy, I didn't have the heart to shoot him, so instead I approached and greeted him pleasantly.

(FRED approaches WINDELL)

Greetings Uncle William.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Well greetings neph...

FRED strikes him across the head with the butt of his rifle. WINDELL falls to the ground.

FRED/ACCUSED

I bludgeoned him with the butt of my rifle. Seeing I had the upper hand, I decided to press my advantage before Uncle William could recover.

FRED menacingly approaches WINDELL, but stops when WINDELL addresses the audience.

WINDELL

(To Audience)

People, this is where things start to get a little risqué, but we assure you that any violence portrayed will be treated with the up most dignity.

(To FRED)

Isn't that right Fred.

FRED mischievously smiles to the audience.

ZEK and SUSAN appear.

ZEK

Be that as it may, the more squeamish may want to avert their eyes.

ZEK looks away as FRED cuts WINDELL. SUSAN looks on in excitement.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM
(Screams out)

Holy macaroons!

WINDELL starts flopping about the floor.

ZEK

Look away Susan, look away, it's just too much to bare.

SUSAN
(Ambivalent)

Eh.

ZEK

Oh, I think I'm going to be sick.

ZEK exit and is followed by SUSAN.

FRED/ACCUSED

I severed the tendon Achilles so he would no longer have use of his legs. This had the benefit of maintaining my advantage but had the unfortunate consequence of making it hard to do anything else with him besides watching him flop around. This became self-evident when he made his request.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

Nephew, you have got the drop on me, and can afford to be liberal about this thing. I have only one thing to ask of you, and that is that you carry me to the house and finish me in the bosom of my family.

FRED/ACCUSED

As unusual and needlessly sadistic to his family as his request was, at its core it seemed pretty reasonable. In order to protect myself from any shenanigans though, I took the precaution a making him get into a wheat sack.

FRED pulls out a wheat sack that WINDELL couldn't possibly fit in.

FRED/ACCUSED

This however, did not fit him; it was too short and much wider than he was; so I had to...

ZEK enters holding his stomach, still queasy. SUSAN follows him strangely okay with everything going on.

ZEK

Whoa, whoa, whoa Fred. I don't think everyone can sit through another act of brutality, isn't that right Susan.

SUSAN

(Ambivalent)

Eh.

ZEK

See how distraught Susan is, Fred?

WINDELL

Zek's right Fred, maybe we should takes this off into the wings.

FRED shrugs as if to say, he's easy, and drags WINDELL off into the wings of the performance space. Out of the sight of the audience.

ZEK and SUSAN remain onstage.

Off Stage we hear various tools being used and bones cracking and breaking.

ZEK

(Nauseous)

So he had to bend his legs, and...

ZEK runs off stage and vomits. SUSAN remains fascinated by what she's witnessing.

SUSAN

So of course he had to bend his legs, then he forced his knees up against his breast, and then got some baling wire and tied him into a tight little ball. Then he fit into the sack quite nicely where the sack could be tied above his head.

FRED enters carrying a bloody sack on his back. WINDELL is obviously not in the sack but occasionally you still hear his voice.

FRED/ACCUSED

I was then presented with the problem that Uncle William was a heavy man.

WINDELL/UNCLE WILLIAM

(From Sack)

Hey!

FRED/ACCUSED

(To the Sack)

Oh shut up, you know it's true.

(To the Audience)

It was all that I could do to get him on my back, and stagger along.

A rope swing appears

FRED/ACCUSED

(Puts the sack down.)

After some distance I came to a swing which some of the children had suspended to the branch of an oak. The sight of the rope gave me a happy inspiration.

FRED attaches the sack to the rope swing and pulls the sack up.

FRED/ACCUSED

In no time at all, with my Uncle still in the sack, swung free to the sport of the wind, like he had been converted into a huge pendulum.

ZEK enters wearing ram horns and acting as if he's eating grass.

FRED/ACCUSED

It was at this moment that my Uncle William's ram appeared.

ZEK/RAM

Bah.

SUSAN

(To ZEK)

What on earth are you doing?

ZEK

What's it look like? I'm a ram

WINDELL

(From Sack)

You are?

ZEK

I am, I am. Don't I look like one.

SUSAN

Before or after the costume change?

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Whoa, zinger.

FRED whistles as if to comment
that "she got you."

ZEK

Okay, you got me. You're a funny gal.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

She is, isn't she?

ZEK

She is, she is.

FRED gets people back on track.

FRED/ACCUSED

(To Zek)

It was at this moment that my Uncle William's ram appeared.

ZEK/RAM

Right, sorry about that. Bah.

FRED/ACCUSED

My Uncle's ram was famous in all that region as a fighter. It was in a state of chronic constitutional indignation. I'm not sure of the particulars but there was obviously some deep disappointment in early life that had soured its disposition, and as a result it had declared war upon the whole world. Looking upon my Uncle swinging there as he was, an idea formulated in my head.

ZEK

Uh-oh Windell, Fred's got that certain artsy look in his eye.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

He does?

ZEK

He does, he does.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Now, let's not get carried away, okay Fred?

FRED continues.

FRED/ACCUSED

To say that it would butt anything accessible is but faintly to express the nature and scope of its military activity; the universe was its antagonist; its method was that of a projectile. No stone wall had ever been known to resist its downward swoop; there were no trees tough enough to stay it; it would splinter them into matchwood and defile their leafy honors in the dust. This irascible and implacable brute--this incarnate thunderbolt--this monster of the upper deep, was reposing in the shade of an adjacent tree, dreaming dreams of conquest and glory. I would summon this beast forth to the field of honor to dispatch its master.

ZEK

I've got to be honest with you Windell. With an introduction like that, I feel like I should go all in on this.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Susan, be honest. How does this look for me?

SUSAN

(Ambivalent)

Eh.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Oh dear.

FRED continues.

FRED/ACCUSED

Having completed by preparations, I imparted to the avuncular pendulum a gentile oscillation, and retiring to cover behind a contiguous rock, lifted my voice in a long, rasping cry, whose diminishing final note was drowned in a noise like that of a swearing cat, which of course sounded if it emanated from the sack.

ZEK looks up to the air listening to the sound, looks at the sack and begins stamping his feet to the ground, like a ram about to charge.

ZEK/RAM

Uh-oh Windell, I think Fred's rubbing off on me.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Why do you say that?

ZEK/RAM

Because I feel something coming over me.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

What, what do you feel.

ZEK/RAM

The call to battle!

ZEK charges at WINDELL.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Now Zek, I'm counting on you to have a cool head.

ZEK strikes WINDELL's sack.

FRED/ACCUSED

It struck sharply upward, and I heard a horrible thump and a piercing scream.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Ow! That hurt you jerk.

FRED/ACCUSED

After it's assault, the beast backed away from its opponent and bowed its head as if in prayer for victory, and again shot forward.

ZEK bows his head and stamps his feet and charges forward again.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Now Zek, remember my bad hip.

ZEK strikes WINDELL.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Whoa, that's smarts.

FRED/ACCUSED

After delivering its second blow, the ram suspended hostilities and walked away.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Oh thank heavens.

FRED/ACCUSED

It was as if the bugles had sung a truce, and having tired of war's alarm the beast resolved to beat the sword into a ploughshare and cultivate the art of peace.

ZEK starts exiting.

ZEK

I don't know about you Windell, but I'm going to need a cold one after this here story.

WINDELL

(From Sack; In Pain)

You are telling the truth.

ZEK

I am, I am.

ZEK exits rubbing his head.

FRED/ACCUSED

Meanwhile, Uncle William's shrieks had abated with emotion, and nothing was heard from him but long, low moans, and at long intervals my name, uttered in pleading tones that were exceedingly grateful to my ears.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Fred, we're going to have to have a talk after this.

FRED/ACCUSED

Evidently the man had not the faintest notion of what was being done to him, and was inexpressibly terrified.

WINDELL

(From Sack)

Fred, I'm starting to cramp up in here.

FRED/ACCUSED

When death comes cloaked in mystery he is terrible indeed. It was my intention to end his misery at this point and would have done so if not for my allergies.

FRED sneezes.

FRED/ACCUSED

That simple sneeze must have rekindled the flame of passion in my chosen weapon, because a succession of smart shocks which shook the ground like a series of light earthquakes. And at a distance I saw the ram charging back, striding through the air almost as if his intent were to take flight. To this day the impression remains that it was a slow, deliberate movement.

ZEK enters running in slow motion with his head down to strike WINDELL.

FRED/ACCUSED

The ram--for it was that animal--being upborne by some power other than its own impetus.

SUSAN

What on earth are you doing now?

ZEK

(Talks in Slow Motion)

Didn't you hear the man? I'm being upborne by some power other than my own impetus. Plus everything looks more dramatic and cool when it's in slow motion. Isn't that right Fred?

FRED gives a thumbs up of approval.

SUSAN

Whatever.

The action continues and ZEK strikes WINDELL. The sack breaks free of the rope and falls to the ground.

FRED/ACCUSED

So frightful was the impact that not only was the neck broken, but the rope, too; and the body of the deceased, forced against the earth, was crushed to pulp beneath the awful front of that meteoric sheep.

ZEK

My lord, do I need an aspirin.

ZEK exits the stage rubbing his head.

FRED/ACCUSED

The concussion stopped all the clocks between Lone Hand and Dutch Dan's, and Professor Davidson, who happened to be in the vicinity, promptly explained that the vibration were from the north to south. If such information is of interest to you. In the end though, my Uncle William was no more.

FRED stops addressing the audience as a whole and goes back to addressing Susan as the Judge.

FRED/ACCUSED

So as you can plainly see your honor, that altogether, one cannot help thinking, that in point of atrocity my murder of Uncle William has seldom been excelled.

ZEK enters.

ZEK

(To Susan)

Now believe it or not Susan, as judge, this statement impressed you with so strong a sense of comparative triviality to the murder of the mother for which the accused was on trial, that you made no further search for mitigating circumstances, but simply instructed the jury to acquit, and the accused left the court without a stain upon his reputation.

SUSAN

No kidding?

ZEK puts his hand up to let Susan know he's being honest.

ZEK

Honest injun.

FRED sees ZEK's hand up and high fives him and walks off stage victoriously.

ZEK

(To the Audience)

Now, I know what you're thinking, this is one whale of a tale but it's all true. Isn't that right Windell?

(WINDELL doesn't respond.)

Windell. Windell?

ZEK looks in the bag.

ZEK

Oh dear. Susan, come over here and give me your honest opinion; how's he look?

SUSAN walks over and looks in the sack.

SUSAN

(Ambivalent)

Eh.

ZEK

Fred!

FRED enters and looks in the sack.

ZEK

Yeah, before the police show up, we should all get our stories straight.

SUSAN

And it's probably going to be the craziest darn thing they ever did hear.

ZEK

You are telling the truth. Crazy to the ears I tell ya, hand to god.

FRED mimes "Mind blown."

BLACKOUT.