

# To Wake the dead

by Lee Mueller

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## To Wake the Dead Characters

**Leonard Elmore** - a literary agent for and good friend of the Late Fred Finnegan. In charge of Fred's wake, and likes to maintain order.

**Joyce Finnegan** - Wife of the late Fred Finnegan. Strong and dedicated wife who loved her husband dearly.

**Chief Wambaugh** - hardnosed ex police chief. Won't put up with anything he considers 'nonsense'.

**Danny Runyon**- a somewhat shady wise guy. Speaks with exaggerated mobster accent. Frequently uses wrong word, to comic effect.

**Peaches Marie Crabtree** - is Danny's moll and former stripper. Dresses in showy cheap, and speaks with exaggerated nasal "Noo Yawk" accent which makes her appear dumb, but she's a college student with an excellent vocabulary and sharp mind.

**Agatha Fletcher** - news reporter for the Associated Wire. Somewhat 'ditzy', speaks with exaggerated "upper crust" English accent.

**Officer Francis** - patrol officer under Chief Wambaugh.

**Stephanie King** - president of the Freddie Finnegan fan club. Dresses mostly in black and is obsessed with horror and vampires. Probably this wake is the first time she has been outdoors in a while.

**Deanna Koonz** - also a member of the Fan Club.

**Clyde Barker** - fan club member. Most likely is a fan of Star Trek as well.

**Fred Finnegan** - ghost of Fred, who is trying to answer a major question: how did he die?

**Ghost of Flanagan** - an Irish spirit who speaks with strong Irish accent and appears only at the end of the play to help solve the mystery.

*.. Preshow Music: Traditional Instrumental or Vocal Irish Music*  
Presets: **Chief Wambaugh** is seated at a table somewhere in the middle of room. **Danny** and **Peaches** are seated at a table relatively close to Chief Wambaugh. **Deena, Stephanie** and **Clyde** are seated at a table at far end i.e. next close to aisle /wall -having open space on one side of them is important. Prior to show they should come in -in character -mingle etc. Finally **Lenny** and **Joyce** should enter -a few moments prior to start time -each holds a drink -Joyce has a handkerchief.  
Lenny and Joyce take stage. .

LENNY: *(clears throat)* If I could have everyone's attention? *(wait for simmering)* Thank you. As most of you know, I'm Leonard Elmore. On behalf of Joyce and the family, I would like to thank you all for coming this evening. *(Deep sigh)*. If anyone were to tell me.. a week ago, I'd be at Fred's wake today, well, I'd have a few "choice" words for them. But I'd owe them an apology wouldn't I? Because here I am, here we all are.. at Fred Finnegan's' wake. *(Beat)* Most of us remember Fred as.. well, an amazing fellow. A good friend and great writer. He could spin a tale, whether it was his murder mysteries or the supernatural thrillers, Finnegan could keep you turning the page. Which was great for me, I was his editor and publishing agent. Anyway, this evening, we're here in memory and celebration. It's really unfortunate he couldn't be here. Fred always told me that he'd love to attend his own wake. If anything, just to see who would show up. I do see a lot of people here that Fred would be honored to know did show up. Former police Chief Wambaugh. Pulitzer prize winning writer, P. D. Jamison. Harry Higgens Clark. The list goes on. In honor of Freddie's wish, about being at his own wake, we have this empty chair up here, just in case. And if he were here, I'm sure he'd be spicing up the evening with his stories and jokes. Especially his jokes. *(Smiles and chuckles)* I can almost hear him now..

FRED: *(from across room)* Hey Lenny! *(this is as a continuation not an interruption -there should be no delay in this dialogue exchange )*

LENNY: He would call from across the room.

FRED: Why did the Germans invent the wheelbarrow?

LENNY: I don't know Freddie, I would say, why did the Germans invent the wheelbarrow?

FRED: So they could bring the Irish home from the pub!

LENNY: That was one of his favorites. And speaking of favorites, one of Freddie's favorite things to do was to "toast". If you ever had the privilege to celebrate anything with Finnegan, like one of his books making the top ten or any occasion he felt was worthy of a celebration: St Patrick's Day, Arbor day, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, then I'm sure you experienced one of his toasts. And by the end of the night, you were sufficiently.. "toasted". In honor of Freddie, we're going to do a round of toasts. If you'll indulge me, I like to kick it off here with one of Freddie's favorites. So, everyone, raise it up.  
"Here's to a long life and a merry one. A quick death and an easy one. A pretty girl and an honest one. A cold beer and another one!"  
*(Raises glass -drinks)*

CHIEF: I've got one!

LENNY: Well, O.K. Everyone, you know our city's finest.. Retired Police Chief Wambaugh and.. current candidate for mayor.

CHIEF: Yeah, yeah. They all know me. (*Looking around*) Especially this table over here. (*Indicates table*) I almost didn't recognize 'em without their arms behind their backs. But anyway, I knew Freddie pretty good. Back when he started writing his cop stories and that. He'd hang out down there at the precinct. Picking up the lingo and that. So, we got to be pretty good buddies. We'd go out sometimes and throw a few back. I'd tell him stories and about the old days back on the beat. He'd use some of the stuff I'd tell him in his stories. Anyways. I recall this one toast he would do. Let's see if I can remember it... it goes.. (*raises glass*) "Here's to you and yours. And to mine and ours. And if mine and ours ever come across you and yours, I hope you and yours will do As much for mine and ours, As mind and ours have done For you and Yours!" (*Raises glass drinks*)

LENNY: Well, Chief! That was good one.

RUNYON: (*stands*) Yes, that was a very good one, I have a better one.

LENNY: Who's has a better one?

RUNYON: If it is all right. If the lovely Mrs. Finnegan and the distinguished guests do not mind.

LENNY: Sure. That's why we're here.

CHIEF: I know you, don't I?

RUNYON: Yes, you know me. Here. Let me help *jog* your "noggin".

(*Danny turns puts hands up as if against wall, spreads legs*)

CHIEF: Danny Runyon!

RUNYON: (*turning back*) Do not worry Chief, I am legitimate now. I do not associate myself with the bad element anymore. I have learned my lesson. I am clean.

CHIEF: Clean huh?

RUNYON: Yes. I am respectable now. I am a lobbyist. I am taking a political venture, very much like yourself.

CHIEF: Yeah, well I'm still keeping my eye on you Runyon.

RUNYON: You are retired now, like me. You need to rest your eyes. As a matter of fact, why not lie your head down on the table and take a little nap.

CHIEF: Is that some sort of crack Runyon?

RUNYON: Not at all my friend. I do not deal in cracks. I was merely saying you should take it easy now. Take an example from your neighbors in the retirement facilities. Get your self a nice pair of plaid Bermuda shorts and a tank top. Sit on your front stoop and water your lawn.

CHIEF: Are you trying to be Funny?

RUNYON: Sure. That is what wakes are for right? Being of fun and good cheer? Is that not what Freddie always said. Am I not right Lenny?

LENNY: Yes, you are right Danny.

RUNYON: Freddie always said, the problem with funerals is that everybody acts like somebody just died. "People live a lifetime, but it only takes a minute to die. So you should celebrate the life. It was a lot longer." He wrote that in one of his books. So I wish to carry out his wishes and celebrate the life.

CHIEF: Alright, alright, Mr. Smart guy.

RUNYON: But I digest. Fredrick and myself go way back. I was a big fan of his of his mysteries. Frederick and I had an occasion to meet at a book fair. We were both reaching for the same Mickey Spillane novel. He mentioned to me at that time, he was writing a mystery surrounding the crime world. I mentioned to him that perchance I may be of some assistance. I knew some fellows that may *inspire* him. He began hanging out down at the club with the guys, trying to pick up some true flavor. We had a lot of good times. I have never seen a mick roll a bocce ball like Finnegan. When it came to Mah-jongg, forget about it. Cash your in tiles. Freddie was the best. He was a good fella. And I mean that in the *true* sense, not the fake Hollywood Scorsese sense. So, I would like to toast Finnegan, on behalf of me and my associates. My *former* associates. In honor of him tonight. Raise them, if you got them. "May those who love us, love us. And those that do not love us, may God turn their hearts. And if he does not turn their hearts, May he turn their ankles, So we will know them by their limping."  
(*drinks*)

CHIEF: Very nice toast there and that, Mickey. But I don't think it's appropriate somebody like you should be here tonight. It's not respectful, associating yourself with Mr. Finnegan and that, in front of the bereaved.

RUNYON: Pardon me? What did you say? Because it sounded like you said you "appropriate being here". If you ask me, I do not think it is appropriate, for any of us to be here. It is not appropriate Mr. Finnegan is six feet below us. If I may, might I just say, if the law enforcement community were his "good friends" ,they should have "had his back". They should have been watching out for him.

LENNY: Uh Danny...

RUNYON: This is the thing, I find inappropriate.

LENNY: Danny, this is not the time..

CHIEF: If you ask me, it's because Freddie was a friend of " yours" and your "kind", that we're here tonight! Bunch a hooligans and thugs.

LENNY: Please, guys.

CHIEF: A guy doesn't "accidentally" fall out of a ten story window, unless he's in the company of people like you!

RUNYON: Excuse me? Because it sounded like you said, *people like me*.

CHIEF: I did. Stuff is always happenin' with people like you. So called 'accidents' n' that.

LENNY: Come on! Chief, please! Let's not..

RUNYON: Excuse me Chief, but I happen to know a lot of cases where a fellow goes in for questioning and "accidentally" falls down a flight of steps.

LENNY: Danny!

RUNYON: (*beat*) I am sorry. You are right Leonard. Forgive me, Joyce I apologize. It was very rude of myself and the good ex-Chief Wambaugh to partake in this.. *rebate*. In such a setting as this.

JOYCE: It's all right guys. You don't need to apologize. We're all a little wound up by this whole thing. I don't think it's news to anyone that Freddie... that his... That the circumstances of his passing were as mysterious as one his own stories.

CHIEF: Can I just add, I happen to know a lot of good men down there at the precinct who are lookin' into everything they can about this whole... thing.

JOYCE: Thank you chief. I appreciate that.

RUNYON: And may I also add, some former associates of mine are also looking into the matters that tran-spiraled at the Park Plaza hotel. I am seeing to it, because I was a friend and I care, not because of any political enigma.

JOYCE: Thank you Danny. Thank you everyone for.. everything. As Lenny said earlier, Freddie would be thrilled to see all of you here this evening. I'm sure he's smiling, wherever he may be. Whether, looking down upon us or even sitting up here in this chair. (*Looks back at chair*) We may never truly understand the circumstances of Freddie's... "leaving" us. But we do know the circumstances his "coming into" our lives. (*Sigh*) He came into my life.. pretty much 'out of the blue'. I was an undergrad at the University. A few of us had gone out after midterms, to celebrate, and here was this loud, boisterous guy, sitting across the room, singing along to all these old Irish songs. I guess you already know it was Freddie. (*FRED should appear across the room- no actor should acknowledge*) As soon as he sees us.. Sees me, he makes a bee line for our table. (*FRED crosses to Joyce-she cannot look at him*) He was full of .. lines that night. The first thing he said to me.. He's says..

FRED: This is certainly 'some enchanted evening'."

JOYCE: And I said, "Oh really? Why is that?" and he says,

FRED: Because I just saw a stranger across a crowded room.

JOYCE: And then you know what he says?

FRED: You know what? You look just like my first wife.

JOYCE: Oh. Is that right?

FRED: Yeah. And I'm not even married. (*Crosses up and sits in his chair*)

JOYCE: Oh give me a break! (Beat) But.. The rest was.. As they say.. "history". (*Takes a deep breath as if about to sob*) I would like to continue this evening with one of my favorite, "Freddie" toasts. It was one that Freddie used the night we met. (Sighs) If I can get through it. "May the Road rise to meet you.... (*catches breath trying to hold it together*) May the..

FRED: May the sun shine warm upon your face.

JOYCE: And the rains.. fall soft upon your fields.

FRED: And until we meet again.

BOTH: May God hold you in the hollow of his hand. (*Joyce sobs- Lenny reaches to comfort her into shoulder-she does so for a few beats- but pulls back and crosses away -Fred reaches out as if to touch her -but can't -A few beats should be allowed to pass to let audience absorb this - and then*)

DEENA: (*stands*) Ummm, excuse me? I don't mean to be..

STEPHANIE: (*tugs at her to make her sit*) Deena!

DEENA: What? I gotta say something.

STEPHANIE: (*whispering*) No you don't. Sit down.

DEENA: What? It's totally important.

STEPHANIE: (*whispering*) No. It's totally embarrassing.

DEENA: No it's not. We have to say something. I'm not just gonna..

LENNY: Can we help you with something?

DEENA: Yes. I mean, no. We can help you with something. I think. O.K. Can I just say, that was totally moving Mrs. Finnegan.

STEPHANIE: (*stands*) It was. Totally!

DEENA: I didn't want to interrupt or anything but me and Stephanie just wanted to say..

STEPHANIE: Me? It was you!

DEENA: It was Clyde so, chill out! You felt it too!

STEPHANIE: (*whispering*) Tell 'em who we are.

DEENA: What?

STEPHANIE: Tell them who we are. I mean, really? Don't just start like.. blabbing.

DEENA: Oh right! yeah. Sorry. I'm Deena Koonze and this is Stephanie King and..

STEPHANIE: Clyde.

DEENA: What?

STEPHANIE: *Clyde*. Don't forget Clyde.

DEENA: Oh yeah. And Clyde. (*nudges Clyde*) Clyde Barker. (*Clyde stands*) We're with the National Charter of the Triple "F". "C". The *Fredrick Finnegan Fan Club*. I'm president, Steph's VP and Clyde's secretary.

STEPHANIE: And like we don't mean to like be rude and bum rush the wake, but.. we all got this like vibe..

DEENA: We are certified mediums.

STEPHANIE: Not the fake for "entertainment purposes only", but the real kind. We're not entertaining.

DEENA: We don't get 'vibes" that much, but this was way strong.

STEPHANIE: Way, way strong. Clyde picked up on in first. His gift is like.. Strongest.

DEENA: Yeah, but then we all felt it. So, I felt it was important, since.. we all felt it.

STEPHANIE; Yeah, when Joyce.. I mean, Mrs. Finnegan was speaking just now.. About meeting Freddie for the first time..

DEENA: We all felt a presence..real strong. A big time "cold" spot.

STEPHANIE: Like major, major big time. Way cold.

DEENA: Clyde was saying he could see a "form" in the room.

STEPHANIE: Yeah, it's Mr. Finnegan was...present.

CLYDE: He still is.

DEENA & STEPHANIE: Really?

STEPHANIE: (*cont*) Cool.

DEENA: We just.. wanted to share that with you.

STEPHANIE: Yeah, we don't mean to freak you out or anything. I mean, if you're not into that sort of thing. The whole psychic paranormal ghost trip thing. But.. you know, Freddie did write some awesome books about the supernatural, Celtic Ghosts and...

DEENA: *The Shade of Loch Loman* was amazing!

STEPHANIE: *The Vesper Chronicles* changed my life!



CLYDE: *Interview with a Specter* was the quintessential.

DEENA & STEPHANIE: Oh yeah!

DEENA: (*cont.*) But anyway, I.. we just wanted you to know. Freddie was here. He walked right through the room. Clyde said he could see him standing by you.

CLYDE: He still is.

DEENA & STEPHANIE: Really?

STEPHANIE: Cool!

LENNY: (*clears throat*) Well, that's.. interesting..

CHIEF: Aw, what kinda horse-malarkey is that? (*stands*) 'Scuse my French and that.

JOYCE: No, Chief. It's alright.

CHIEF: Officer Francis!

FRANCIS: Yes sir?

CHIEF: Let's escort these kids outta here.

JOYCE: Chief! I said it's all right!!

FRED: Yeah, Chief. Chill

out! CHIEF: Huh?

JOYCE: I said chill out. It's all right. They're not hurting anything.

CHIEF: Huh?

FRED: Sit down Wambaugh. (*Chief sits*)

JOYCE: I said sit down, they are not hurting anything. Leave them alone.

CHIEF: Ya want *riff raff* in here? I can have 'em thrown out.

JOYCE: No, it fine. Please just...

FRED: Oh great Wambaugh, you upset Joyce!

RUNYON: Do not upset Joyce Chiefy. It would not be a good thing. If Freddie is here.

FRED: You tell 'em Danny.

RUNYON: I am telling you.

CHIEF: I'm not trying to upset anyone. I'm tryin' to maintain order n' that. This is a wake for cryin' out loud. The only ones upsettin' anybody is these kids with their spook talk.

FRED: Don't push her chief.

JOYCE: Chief, no one is upset. Everything is fine.

CHIEF: All right. Fine. I'm sorry. Officer Francis? You can sit back down n' that.

FRANCIS: All right Chief.

DEENA: O.K. Like I am soooo sorry, I totally didn't mean to..

JOYCE: Deena, it's fine. To tell you the truth, I didn't know what it was but, I felt something also.

DEENA & STEPHANIE: Cool. *(they sit)*

JOYCE: Thank you. So, now I know it wasn't just me.

FRED: Actually, it's just me. *(Stands)*

JOYCE: *(to Lenny)* I'm sorry?

LENNY: What? I didn't say anything.

JOYCE: Oh. I thought you said..

LENNY: But if I could just say, if indeed Freddie has arrived, he's about ten minutes late. I always told him he would be late for his own funeral, and that seems to be the case.

FRED: Somehow, I knew you were going to do that joke Lenny.  
*(Crossing down toward table with Deena, Steph and Clyde)*

LENNY: After all, he was always late getting his rewrites to the editor. Sometimes, the stories about "why" they were late, were much better than the stories he had written.

FRED: *(to Table Of Deena, Steph and Clyde)* So, this is my fan club!

LENNY: An interesting story Freddie told me, is the origin of these "wakes". It seems in the old days when people..well, passed on, they didn't have the medical technology they posses today, therefore, no one was one-hundred per-cent sure the deceased was.. well, deceased. There were cases where the loved one would.. "pop up" during the funeral. Having only been in a deep sleep and not the "big sleep".

FRED: That's a good line Lenny. Deep sleep. Big sleep. I wonder where you got that? Hmm? *(Circling table)*

CLYDE: You said that?

DEENA: Said what?

STEPHANIE: What?

CHIEF: Huh?

LENNY: I'm sorry, did someone say something?

DEENA: Clyde said something.

CLYDE: Actually, Mr. Finnegan said something. That line about the big sleep.

LENNY: Yes, actually Fred did say the line about "deep sleep" but how did you.. ?

FRED: It's all right Lenny, go on.

CLYDE: It's all right. Go on.

LENNY: All right. (*clears throat*) Anyway, since they couldn't be sure if someone was legitimately dead, they would sit around to make sure. To see if the person would "wake up" or not. Hence, the term wakes.

FRED: I don't think I'm going to be popping up any time soon there Lenny my man. I have a distinct feeling that... I'm down for the count. I'm out of the loop. I'm out to...(as if just realized something) I'm out..

LENNY: So, having "wakes" today, may seem.. Out of date... out..

FRED: Out the window!

CLYDE: What?

DEENA & STEPHANIE: What?

LENNY: I'm sorry?

CHIEF: Huh?

DEENA: Clyde! Shhh! Be quiet.

FRED: I remember now. *The window*. That's how I got here.

CLYDE: The window?

STEPHANIE: The window?

CHIEF: Huh?

DEENA: What are you talking about?

CLYDE: I'm not talking.

LENNY: Did you want to say something?

DEENA: What do you mean *you're* not talking? Yes, you are talking. You just said "the window".

FRED: I said "the window".

CLYDE: He said "the window".

STEPHANIE: No, you said "the window".

LENNY: The window?

CHIEF: What's that? The widow? Sure Joyce is a widow.

STEPHANIE: No! Window!

DEENA: What does he mean by window?

STEPHANIE: I don't know. It's a mystery to me.

FRED: Yes. O.K. I did write some mysterious stuff, but this, this is all new to me. This is real. A *real mystery*.

DEENA: (to Clyde) What about a window?

FRED: I remember.. Looking out the window.. and .. it's still a little fuzzy. I guess because I landed on my head. (*touches head*) I recall... looking and then... falling. .

CLYDE: He's talking about what happened.

DEENA & STEPHANIE: Who?

FRED: And then there was the white light, and the tunnel.. just like those people on the Discovery Channel talk about.

CLYDE: Fred.

DEENA & STEPHANIE: Fred?

CLYDE: Yes, Fred. Mr Finnegan. Now be quiet.

FRED: Out the window and.. gone. To the big real estate agent in the sky. Put a down payment on the farm. But.. Why am I here? Why isn't there a harp in my hand? (*Picks up Harp Lager bottle- looks at it-double take*) Oh. But what I really don't.. what I can't remember....

LENNY: Is there something I can help you with?

FRED: Yeah, you can help me remember what happened. I don't remember slipping.. Or tripping over anything. Doing a Rob Petrie out the window. I didn't pass out and...

DEENA: I think Clyde is "tele-commuting".

LENNY: I'm sorry? "Telecommuting"?

STEPHANIE: Yeah, he does it a lot. Mostly, with people nobody has ever heard of.

DEENA: He did have a conversation with H.P. Lovecraft that one time.

STEPHANIE: Oh yeah, that's right.

LENNY: So, wait a minute. You mean to tell me, your friend is talking to..

DEENA: Yeah, with Mr Finnegan.

STEPHANIE: Clyde has "the gift". I mean, we all do, but Clyde's is like.."super major big time". He can commute and channel..

DEENA: He was on the History Channels "Scariest People On Earth"

LENNY: So you mean, your friend there, Clyde..

CLYDE: I hear dead people.

CHIEF: He hears... ?! All right, that's it. I can't take this "Scooby Doobie" crap anymore. Officer Francis!

RUNYON: Chief Wambaugh, I believe Mrs. Finnegan requested you to desist and desist with wanting to throw people out. Am I not correct in my assumption?

JOYCE: Yes Danny, you are.

CHIEF: But Joyce! These kids over there are comin' up with some doozies! You ain't buyin into this nonsense and that are you? I know I'm not. I know most of the people in this room ain't goin for it.

JOYCE: Well, maybe I am chief. And maybe the people in this room tonight are as well.

RUNYON: She is correct Chief. I have been known to have an open mind about things of this nature. In fact, the doll I'm with, Miss Peaches Marie Crabtree... (*Peaches Stands*).. Is a participle in the Sally Struthers correspondence courses in parapsycosis.

PEACHES: Parapsychology.

RUNYON: Correct. Para..psychologically.

FRED: Wait! Peaches Marie Crabtree? I know that name. I know that... face.

FRANCES: The Peaches Marie? From the midnight shows at Fuzzy's Baby Doll Palace?

FRED: Oh! That's where I know that... face.

PEACHES: Do I know you?

CHIEF: Do you know her?

FRANCES: Sure. I'm Officer Frances. I worked the vice raid last August. I was the one that told you to "Drop the boa constrictor and back away slowly."

PEACHES: Oh right! Right! How have you been?

FRANCES: Not bad. Not bad at all. I'm looking at a possible promotion next month and..

CHIEF: Officer Frances!

FRANCES: Sorry sir.

RUNYON: Anyway, my point is.. Miss Crabtree has been indicating to me, that she has felt certain.. ana.. anatomical.. what was it doll?

PEACHES: Anomalies.

RUNYON: Right. What she said. In this room.

CHIEF: She's what?

FRANCES: She's feeling anomalies sir.

CHIEF: We can't have that in a public place! Run her in.

FRANCES: It's all right sir.

RUNYON: If I may continue? I only thought I would mention it, since the subject and Freddie have arisen. Would you like to inform them Miss Crabtree about the indications you were indicating to me?

PEACHES: Well, keep in mind, I am not certified in the field. Parapsychology is only a hobby, if you will. It was a side line interest I got while I was doing research for my masters in Sociology. Anyway, I was explaining to Daniel, according to many popular held theories, the introduction of an "invitational article" or trigger object, can facilitate metaphysical results. In essence, the introduction of the 'empty' chair, proposed by Mr. Elmore, was more or less, an "invitation" to the spirit of Mr. Finnegan.

DEENA: She's right! Ghosts won't enter unless you invite them.

STEPHANIE: No Dee, that's vampires. Don't you know your Anne Rice?

DEENA: Oh yeah.

CHIEF: What is that? There's vampires in here?

PEACHES: No, chief. Only an unfulfilled apparition.

LENNY: Unfulfilled apparition?

DEENA: Of course! Because of the whole "mystery" about his death.

PEACHES: It's just a theory mind you. But spirits are believed to remain on this earthly plain because of some unfulfilled wish or desire.

STEPHANIE: Right, right! The ungrateful dead.

CHIEF: The what? Grateful Dead? Those hopped up hippies?

PEACHES: No Chief. "Grateful Dead" is a term of folklore. Song cycles, or folk songs extending back to Celtic cultures. If a mortal dies before fulfilling some desire, their spirit will not continue on. It will remain until the desire is fulfilled. Until they are.. Grateful.

LENNY: So, let me get this straight. What we're saying here is.. by putting this chair up here for Freddie, we've invited him here. And the reason he's here, is because he has some wish or desire that hasn't been fulfilled?

JOYCE: Or something happened to him that he didn't understand.

CLYDE & FRED: Exactly!

RUNYON: Like perhaps, his ultimate reprise from a hotel window.

CHIEF: If that don't beat all. I'm sorry Mrs. Finnegan, that was a lovely dinner n' that earlier but I don't think I can digest this stuff. We got a two-bit stripper and a buncha.. wacko hocus-pocus punks n', that, tryin to spook everybody, sayin' Freddie's runnin' around here, 'cause he doesn't know who pushed him outta the window.

JOYCE: Excuse me Chief, but who said anything about Freddie being "pushed" out of window?

CHIEF: Huh?

JOYCE: "Pushed" Chief. You said he was 'pushed'. How do you know that?

CHIEF: Huh? Oh no, I don't know that he was.. pushed n' that.. It was just ..some the fellas, we're talkin. You know how they talk and that. They had a theory.. that maybe.. .

RUNYON: Do you have some "information" you would like to share with the group? Maybe about an occurrence in Room 1042 of the Park Plaza Hotel?

CHIEF: How did you know it was Room 1042, Runyon?

RUNYON: Everybody knew that.

FRED: They did?

CHIEF: They did?

RUNYON: Sure they did. It was in the paper. Time or Newsweek or the Valencia County News-Bulletin.

JOYCE: Regardless of where you got the information Danny, the fact remains that the spirit of my dear husband may be present here tonight and..

CHIEF: You're not buyin' into that there "ghost talk" are ya Joyce?

JOYCE: Yes Chief, I'm considering it. I realize, a lot of people may not buy into it, but if you knew Freddie at all, then you knew he had a very open mind. I also have an open mind. I do realize this may not be the time or place for...

PEACHES; Actually Mrs. Finnegan, excuse me for interrupting, but this is the ideal time and perfect place. The life forces in this room, all of his friends, his family, the energy projected in this room must be amazing.

FRED: Yeah, I do feel a little giddy.

CLYDE: She's right. There may be no better time or place.

STEPHANIE: For sure.

DEENA: For reals! If we don't help Mr Finnegan now...

PEACHES: He will never move on. He'll be bound to this plane for a long time.

FRED: Well, that's not so bad. At least I'll get to see the next episode of Survivor.

JOYCE: All right. But there must be a way we can handle this.. discreetly, without upsetting all of the guests.

CHIEF: The way we can handle this is, is to toss all 'em right out the door.

RUNYON: How very social of you Chief. Is that how you deal with problems? Toss people out of buildings?

JOYCE: Chief! Danny! Please!

LENNY: Joyce is right. We need to steer this event back on track. It would be nice to think that Freddie is here among us, that somehow we've... woken him up, by inviting him .. but I'm sure if he were here, he would want the party to continue.

FRED: Party on Lenny. Don't let me stop you.

LENNY: Let us put aside the.. "speculation" we've created here this evening and continue on in a more 'realistic' nature.

JOYCE: Miss Crabtree, Clyde, may I speak to you two privately for a moment.

LENNY: Pardon me, Joyce? There will be plenty of time for that later, I'm sure.

JOYCE: I really would like to do it now. I'd like to speak to them, out in the hall or another room. We won't disrupt the guests. You all can continue on with your..'realistic nature'.

LENNY: Let me be realistic and say it would be better if you did that later Joyce. You should be here with everyone. This is your husband's wake after all. How would it look if you just ran off with some strangers?

FRED: *(to Lenny -crossing to him)* Well! Always the editor huh?

JOYCE: They're not strangers, they're Freddie's fans. I'd really like to speak with them.

LENNY: I realize that Joyce but.. Lest you forget, one of the distinguished guests here tonight is Ms. Agatha C Fletcher of the Assimilated Press Wire News service and.. I'd hate to image what she would write about this evening.

FRED: Agatha Fletcher!? She doesn't have a original thought in her head. Give her a couple drinks and she'll write anything you tell her write.



JOYCE: Maybe you're right.

FRED: What? Maybe *he's* right? What is this?

JOYCE: I shouldn't abandon the guests.. (*crosses up to Lenny*)

AGATHA: (*stands*) Dear Joyce, darling Lenny. I assure you, I hold dear Frederick in the highest regard. I would never sour any story about him, under any circumstances. Might I also say, I am finding all this paranormal business absolutely fascinating! Carry on if you wish.

JOYCE: Miss Crabtree, Clyde, I guess I will talk to you later.

FRED: What? Later?

CHIEF: Very fine Mrs. Finnegan. Very fine decision.

FRED: I wish someone else could hear me, beside the goth squad over here.

CLYDE: Excuse me?

CHIEF: Huh?

LENNY: All right. What I thought we would do, is have one big toast and then share some of our favorite stories about Freddie.

FRED: I've gotta do something! This is wrong! (*quickly makes his way to back*)

LENNY: If everyone would lift your glasses...

CLYDE: This is not good.

LENNY: I would like to propose a toast. To Fredrick Finnegan! Wherever he may be!

CLYDE: He's going to do something.

STEPHANIE: He is? Why? What's wrong?

CLYDE: Something. He says there's something wrong.

DEENA: Why?

LENNY: (*to Clyde, Deena & Steph*) Excuse me? Do you want to join us? Lift your glass of... sodie or whatever you're drinking there?

STEPHANIE: Who us? Yeah, O.K. O.K. Sure.

DEENA: Clyde was just saying that Mr. Finnegan is upset.

LENNY: Is he? Well, he was always upset with me. But anyway, to Freddie Finnegan, wherever he may be, however upset he may be... (*drink in his hand should fling up- if actor will hold cup near bottom and squeeze thumb and finger together -essentially making cup pop straight up from hand*) What the...!

JOYCE: What happened?

LENNY: My cup! It was like someone knocked it out of my...

CLYDE: I told you he was mad.

*MUSIC comes on : Either "Please Help Me I'm Falling" by Hank Locklin or "Let The Bodies Hit The Floor" by Drowning Pool -at a Moderate volume so that all the dialogue below will have to be shouted over the music.*

LENNY: Hello? Who...turned.. Excuse me?! Why is that on?  
Could we... ? Excuse me?! Could we turn off the music?

CHIEF: Officer Francis?!

FRANCIS: Yes Sir?

CHIEF: Huh?

FRANCIS: I said, Yes Sir?

CHIEF: Turn off that boo-gee Woo-gee music.

FRANCIS: I'll try sir.

CHIEF: Huh?

FRANCIS: I said, "I'll Try Sir". *(runs to back or out door)*  
*(Clyde will also leave at this point)*

RUNYON: If I am not mistaken, Freddie liked this song.

LENNY: What?

CHIEF: Huh?

RUNYON: This song. Freddie used to play this song on the jukebox at the club. It would run everybody out. He did it all the time.

CHIEF: Time? *(Looks at watch)* It's..*(whatever time is)*

DEENA: Now do you believe us?

LENNY: What?!

CHIEF: What?

STEPHANIE: He's trying to tell us something.

LENNY: I'm sorry everyone. I'm not sure how this happened. We'll get it turned off here shortly.

CHIEF: Officer Francis?

JOYCE: Freddie.

LENNY: I don't even think we have this music, I'm not sure how it got in there or even how it got turned on.

JOYCE: Freddie!?

LENNY: If we just.. Turn it off? Someone?

CHIEF: Officer Francis!

JOYCE: Freddie!? Could you please stop the....

*Music turns off*

JOYCE: (*cont.*) ..music? Thank you.

LENNY: Uh.. I'm sure it was.. just a short in the sound system. Somehow.. someone.. accidentally.. bumped the button or something.

RUNYON: Sure Lenny. Sure.

LENNY: As soon as I get a fresh drink we will continue..

AGATHA: (*stands*) I would like to propose a toast!

LENNY: Yes! Good! Good Idea. A toast. If I could get a drink? Could someone..

AGATHA: To the most fascinating wake I have ever attended! I have been to many...

FRANCIS: (*re-enters quickly*) Yes sir?! Were you calling?

CHIEF: Huh?

FRANCIS: I couldn't find where that was coming from. It wasn't the system in here. I thought maybe someone.. you know, bumped the button.. But I don't see how that's possible.

LENNY: Yes, anyway, Agatha? Go ahead. I believe you where toasting?

AGATHA: Yes, to Fredrick, if you're here. I want you to know, you're secrets are safe with me.

RUNYON: Secrets?

JOYCE: Agatha, what un-speakables are you speaking about?

AGATHA: Oh no,no. I'm not falling for that again. I cannot speak them, for then they would not be unspeakables.

RUNYON: Pardon me, but I remember now. The room number. 1042. That is where I read it. In Agatha's column. If I am not mistaken, you published the room number.

AGATHA: Freddie's room? Oh that! That's a speakable. Of course, I report all the facts.

JOYCE: Where did you get these facts?

AGATHA: From the fax.

JOYCE: Uh-huh. But where did you get them?

AGATHA: From the fax. The fax.

RUNYON: Exactly. Where did you get the facts?

AGATHA: From where I said, the fax.

JOYCE: You got the facts from the...

AGATHA: From the fax.

PEACHES: I believe she is saying "fax". (*Spelling*) F. A. X.

RUNYON: The facts from the fax.

PEACHES: Right. The (*spells*) F. A.C.T.S. from the F.A.X.

LENNY: You received a F.A.X.?

JOYCE: With all the.. F.A.C.T.S.?

AGATHA: Yes, yes. It was in my article. Everything that was in the fax. I reported faithfully!

LENNY: Where did you get it?

AGATHA: My faith?

RUNYON: No. Just the fax ma'm.

AGATHA: Oh, it was sent out to all the press.

LENNY: Who sends it out?

FRANCIS: We do.

LENNY: You do?

FRANCIS: Yes. On any high profile.. *Event*. Sometimes, they send a press release. It cuts down on the "media" descending on us. You know, swarms of reporters, cameras, lights, microphones. A million questions, a million answers. So, with a general statement containing all the facts, it cuts down on the headache.

LENNY: So, what exactly was in this fax?

FRANCIS: Well, I'm not sure. Probably, that Mr Finnegan... passed away after a... sustained fall from considerable height. It probably mentioned the Park Plaza. It's location, you know, address. And I guess the room number.

RUNYON: There! That is how I knew the room number, ex Chief Wambaugh. It was printed in the paper. However, I do not image the Press Release constrained anything about Mr. Finnegan being "Pushed", did it?

FRANCIS: Oh no sir, we would never *assume* something like that.

PEACHES: May I ask, out of curiosity, why was he at the Park Plaza?

RUNYON: And may I ask, why dear Ex-Chief Wambaugh believes dear Freddie was "pushed"?

AGATHA: Pushed? Oh no, no, no, no.! I've come to the understanding that dear little Freddie had had...(*thinks a momemt*) have had?.. No, had..had.. Yes! One too many cocktails at the hotel bar and simply.. "Whoopsie Daisied" out his window.

LENNY: O.K. I think this is enough about...

JOYCE: (*upset*) *One too many cocktails?* Is that what they're saying?! Let me just set the record straight and tell you that Fred was stone cold sober that night. So you can forget about "writing" any stories about my husband..

LENNY: (*interrupts*) All right! Joyce? Agatha? Please, let's just drop this whole

JOYCE: And another fact I need to clarify before too many people "read" anything into it. My husband was at the Park Plaza is because he was meeting *me* there.

LENNY: He was meeting *you*? I thought he was meeting those guys from D.C. about the new story.

JOYCE: No. They canceled. He called me from the hotel to tell me. He said, since the room was booked.. and since Random House paid for it, we might as well use it.

LENNY:(*overlap at her "paid for it*) Random House? What do you mean "Random House"? Back up here a minute, because I'm missing some facts now. I thought that political 'watch dog" group paid for it. He was meeting them for background on his new "political thriller".

JOYCE: Let's not get into this now Lenny.

LENNY: No. Let's *get into* now. Why was he meeting Random House?

JOYCE: We will have plenty of time to talk about this later. Let's not disturb our guests. Let's have another toast or a story or..

LENNY: No. I need to know why Freddie was meeting *another* publisher Joyce.

JOYCE: O.K. I'm sorry Lenny. He was meeting another Publisher because he had an offer to.. "Jump ship" for the new book. A bigger advance. Total creative control. I'm sorry you had to hear it like this, if you didn't already know. Fred was going to tell you.. I thought he had.

LENNY: Total creative control? I gave him total creative control! If he wanted more money, I could've given him more money.

JOYCE: I know Lenny, but Fred didn't feel you were behind the book. You wouldn't promote it and market it...

LENNY: Well this is a fine kick in the pants! I can't believe this! Why wouldn't I be behind the book? I was the one that suggested a Political Thriller! I set up the meeting with the guys from Washington! So what does he do? Takes it to another company! We were friends. We were good friends. Why didn't he tell me?!

JOYCE: It wasn't about "friendship" Lenny. It was about business.

LENNY: (*sarcastic*) Oh. O.K. So long as it was just 'business'. (*Crosses away*)

JOYCE: Lenny. Come on. He wasn't going to leave you high and dry.

LENNY: O.K. Where were we? Oh yes! A wake! A wake for my dear, dear friend.. my good, good friend.. Frederick Finnegan. Does anyone have a nice story or a toast they would like to propose to my dear, good friend? Anyone?

CLYDE: (*enters - actually is Fred in Clyde's clothes*) I have a story.

DEENA: Clyde! Where did you go?

STEPHANIE: Yeah Clyde, you missed a bunch of stuff.

LENNY: Oh look. Our little creepy friend has a story.

CLYDE: It's a story Mr Finnegan told me.

LENNY: Oh even better! A Finnegan story! This should be good. (*Crosses away*)

CLYDE: Grab me a cold one while you're goin' over there Lenny.

DEENA: Cold one? You don't drink Clyde.

CLYDE/FRED: Soda's fine Lenny. A nice, cold, plain soda. (*Beat*) On the rocks. Water back.

CHIEF: Now just what in the Dickens is goin' on here now? Who's that guy that guy ?

CLYDE/FRED: It's me..chief. The Scooby Dooby kid.

CHIEF: (*uncertain*) Oh.. Yeah... O.K.

CLYDE/FRED: I wanted to.. That's is, Mr Finnegan told me a story, that I would.. That *he* would like me to tell you.

STEPHANIE: Clyde? What are you doing?

CLYDE/FRED: Telling a story.

DEENA: I think what Stephanie means is.. This is so.. You know ... I mean it's like.. This is so unlike you.

CLYDE/FRED: Well, I'm..not really feeling like myself right now.

STEPHANIE: You know what? This is just like that D&D convention when Clyde took a sip of a wine cooler. He was like so wasted.

DEENA: Oh yeah, I remember! He kept saying that Justin Beiber was a musical genius.

CLYDE/FRED: Ummm... (*to himself-somewhat softly*) Clyde? Are you still here? What do I say now? Huh? Oh. Am I talking out loud? Sorry. (*few beats-shakes head as if listening*) O.K. (*To everyone*) O.K. We.. I have something to say.. A story that.. Mr Finnegan related to me... in a... in a letter. I had written to Mr Finnegan and he corresponded. With this story.

DEENA: He did?

CLYDE/FRED: It's the story of Finneas Flanagan. He was a bartender at a Public House in a small town. Finneas had a capacity for "listening". He would listen to stories that the patrons of the pub would tell him. And old Finneas could remember all these stories; word for word, every detail. After a while, when new people would come into the pub, Finneas would re-tell these stories, to entertain the new people. But he didn't just.. "re-tell" the stories. He would make the stories his own. Change the names, the places, you know. Make them a little more exciting. People really enjoyed Finneas' stories. People would come in the pub just to hear Finneas spin the yarn and knit a tale. (*Cross to near Chief*) For example, there was the story of the chief.. Constable..

CHIEF: Huh?

CLYDE/FRED: The Chief Constable ruled the town with intimidation and ignorance. But he was ignorant of the fact that his intimidation had made no friends. He was also.. oblivious, he thought the towns people would elect him... to.. The high position of .."potentate" of the city. (*Cross to near Danny*) And then there was the story of "Lefty Two-Fingers Discount Mobberelli" . Lefty had lead a life of.. Evil doings and general.. Badness. But one day, Lefty decided that he had enough of the.. Bad, stuff and wanted to be a good person.

RUNYON: I like this Lefty guy.

CLYDE/FRED: He surround himself with.. (*near Peaches*) intellectuals. He even ventured into public service to benefit his community. But try as he may, his tainted past would not release it's grip. Every good deed had a vested interest in the bad.

RUNYON: I don't like this Lefty guy.

CLYDE/FRED: Now the owner of the Pub, of course, noticed the increase in revenue when Finneas told his stories. He wanted Finneas to tell *more* stories, to get *more* people in. So, Finneas told more stories based on people and events in the town. More and more people came. But then, the

owner began telling Finneas "how" to tell the stories and what "stories" to tell. Since he was the boss, Finneas had to oblige. And a funny thing happened; fewer and fewer people came into the pub to hear these stories. Naturally, the owner thought Finneas had lost his touch. He wasn't telling the stories with the same flair. Finneas thought it was the "demands" his boss put on the stories. Finneas thought, if he could get away from the boss, maybe tend bar at another place... but..

*Lenny crosses to Clyde/Fred and hands him the soda*

LENNY: But?

CLYDE/FRED: But that wasn't the problem.

LENNY: It wasn't huh? (*Crosses away*)

CLYDE/FRED: No, The problem wasn't Finneas losing his flair or the demands the owner was making, the problem was.. The people coming into the pub had heard the stories so many times..

LENNY: (*as he is crossing*) ..that they were bored out of their minds. I know, because I've heard this story before. You can only tell the "same" stories so many times before they get old. The people want something new.

CLYDE/FRED: No, that's the *old* story. The new story is that the people had heard the stories so many times, they became familiar with them. And they began to recognize themselves in the tales. For as much twisting and turning as Finneas did to the truth, it was still buried in the story. No flair or manipulation or adjectives could cover it. No matter how the story was told. Or retold. The Constable, as dense as he was, realized he was the Constable in the story. Lefty Two Fingers realized he was the Lefty Two Fingers and on and on.

LENNY: Hmmmm. I like it. It has potential. So, what happens?

CLYDE/FRED: So, what happens is... one morning, the town spinstress, Mary O' Riley tosses a farthing into the town wishing well, and instead of the usual "splash" there is a dull thud. Peering over edge, down into the well, she sees the body of Finneas Flanagan.

LENNY: Ah! I see. Finneas made one final wish.

CHIEF: Maybe he was pushed in the well.

RUNYON: Maybe the Constable or someone threw him the well. Wishing he would stop telling those stories.

FRANCIS: Or maybe the owner of the pub. Cutting his losses. Or even the Lefty Two Fingers guy.

AGATHA: Maybe he fell. Had a few nips to keep warm, and just...



PEACHES: Or perhaps.. from a purely sociological point of view, the pressure to produce stories for the masses, can be overwhelming. Perhaps he was depressed. He wasn't pushed. He didn't slip or trip.. perhaps he..

LENNY: Jumped? That's not a very intriguing conclusion is it? It would never sell.

PEACHES: Suicide? Sure it would. It's romantic. It worked for Anna Karina. Madame Bovary. Romeo and Juliet.

LENNY: But those are classical tragedies. Today it would never work. Today it would turn out that Finneas's wife just took out a big insurance policy on him and stood to collect millions. Don't you think so, Joyce?

CLYDE/FRED: Lenny, you're such a...(catches self stops) LENNY: What? Did you say something?

CLYDE/FRED: Uh.. I said, "Funny, there's such a"... propensity to speculate on the end of the story. Was he pushed? Did he fall? Or did he jump?

LENNY: Well? How does it end? What happened?

CLYDE/FRED: Well, I don't know, I didn't... Fred didn't finish the story.

LENNY: Oh! (*Chuckles*) I get it now. I see what's happening here. This story that Freddie sent to you is.. a little relevant. Just a tad metaphorical. It follows along nicely.

CHIEF: Well, I'm not following anything. I don't know this Flanagan fella n' that.

LENNY: This is all some sort of ruse. Right out of Hamlet. The play's the thing. In this case a little story.

CHIEF: I can't say I ever met this Hamlet fella either.

LENNY: And you are who again? (*Crosses up close looking Clyde over*)

CLYDE/FRED: Me? (*Smiles*) You know.

LENNY: I do?

CLYDE: Sure. I'm... Clyde. I'm in the fan club.

LENNY: But you seem to know a lot of things. Things that normal people wouldn't know.

DEENA: He's not normal, believe me Mr Elmore.

CLYDE/FRED: Fan's know a lot things about the people they're fanatical for. Maybe he's.. maybe I'm just...perceptive. Extra perceptive. Maybe you should listen to what we've been telling you.

LENNY: We?

CLYDE/FRED: Yes. We. Myself. Stephanie. Deena. Peaches. Joyce. "We." We want to know what happen to Fred.

LENNY: Well, if he's here, why don't you ask him. You communicate with dead people right? Hey Freddie! Got a fan here that wants to ask you something.

CLYDE/FRED: I did ask him. He doesn't remember. That's why he's here.

LENNY: "He doesn't remember"? How are we suppose to know? None of us were there. Only Joyce was invited.

CLYDE/FRED: Are you sure? How do you know, no one else in *this* room was in *that* room, that night? Maybe someone else came by.

LENNY: Who knew Freddie was there?

CLYDE/FRED: Well, you did. The guys from DC did. Random House did. Finding that kind of information wouldn't be too difficult.

LENNY: And you would know, being a fan right?

CLYDE/FRED: Sure. Anyone could find out. A fan. A friend. The cops. The mob. Anyone could sneak into his room while he was unaware. **What** do you think Lenny? Does it have potential ? Does it have wings?

LENNY: Wings? Fred used to ask me that. How did you..

CLYDE/FRED: (*begins to exit*) I gotta fly Len. Nature calls. (*exits quickly*)

LENNY: Hey! Hang on a minute. (*Follows Clyde/Fred*) How did you know that? That's what Fred used to ask me. Claude or Clyde or whatever your name is. Come back here! Wait a minute!

*Clyde/Fred exits- -actual Clyde enters quickly)*

CLYDE: Yes Mr. Elmore? Can I help you?

CHIEF: (*stands*) Excuse me there Len, If you all don't mind, I need a little breather n' that.

AGATHA: Nature is calling my number as well, therefore I really have to go... to uh... you know... the facilities, to uh.. Facilitate. (*Crosses to exit*)

LENNY: Of course, why not? I think we all need a little break. I would like a word with a few people in private. Joyce?

JOYCE: As would I. Miss Crabtree? Deena, Stephanie? Could I speak with you?

DEENA: Clyde! I need to talk to you!

(*Clyde ducks out quickly*)

DEENA: Clyde! Come back here! (*Goes after him exits*)

RUNYON: I need to make a phone call. (*Crosses to exit*) There is a particular bill that has been voted upon to which I need to retain the results. If you would excuse me.

LENNY: All right then, let's see.. dessert anyone? (*Ad lib any special instructions*)

*As dessert instructions: Stephanie , Peaches will come to Joyce -ad lib silently,they will exit. Officer Francis will join Chief making their way out. When dessert instructions are done. Lenny will exit. Begin the song Heaven by Talking Heads*

*End of Act One*

*for fun- at intermission -Danny can be on payphone talking to someone about bill. (The Bill being voted on has to do with Land Based casinos -and it should appear it is going very well)*

*Chief can be in lobby/hall talking to Officer Francis.(Possibly his platform for mayor. Doing away with Riverboat casinos, encouraging more bill boards...)*

*Or any other pair/ group of characters -improvising dialogue relevant to play.*

Act 2

*Just before start of second act -Joyce, Deena, Steph and Peaches enter silently talking will hover around front/stage area.. Agatha and Officer Francis enter talking*

AGATHA: No, no, no. I am fine. Besides, I've taken...no, have took? No, I've taken.. A taxi. I've taken a taxi to... here. I will not be driving.

*RUNYON and CHIEF enter*

FRANCIS: Could I get you some coffee?

AGATHA: Sure. Could I have just a nip of Irish whiskey in it? This is an Irish wake after all.

*AGATHA will make her way to DANNY and CHIEF as she does they begin dialogue right away as if in mid conversation -Agatha will hover around them*

RUNYON: ..and who do you think the "Big Bad Badge" was about Chiefy?

CHIEF: Huh? What're you talking about there?

RUNYON: The "Big Bad Badge" that Freddie wrote. Is it not oblivious? A police chief forced to retire because he became an embarrassment to the city?

CHIEF: Can't say that I read that one there. What's your point Runyon?

RUNYON: Who do you think that book was based on?

CHIEF: I give up Runyon.

RUNYON: You give up? Tell me Chief, do you believe you will be elected mayor on your good looks?

CHIEF: I'm gunna get rid of them casinos n that, Runyon. That's there's my platform. There nuthin but trouble.

RUNYON: Trouble? Is that what you said? Because it sounded like you said "get rid of Casinos"? I should tell you Chiefy, that a bill just passed that would flavor "land based" casinos.

CHIEF: Huh?

RUNYON: I know you heard me Chief. Because it sounded like I said, "Land based Casinos." We got the idea from one of Freddie's short stories. "Leaping through the Loopholes". Did you read that one Chiefy? He was going to turn that story into a full length novel. That is what he was working on right before he...

CHIEF: "Land based"? Bull horns! No more casinos. We ain't about to turn into no Indian reservation n' that around here.

RUNYON: We're not? How chief?

CHIEF: What are you runnin' off at the mouth about there Runyon?

RUNYON: I am going to re-freshen my cocktail. May I retain anything for you. A nice glass of malox. Geritol with a twist perhaps?

CHIEF: *(waves hand in dismissal)* Aw, go on Runyon. Take a flying leap.  
*(Crosses to sit back down)*

RUNYON: I bet you say that to all the guys. *(Crosses to bar)*

*AGATHA begins making her way toward front to Joyce, Deena and Stephanie*

AGATHA: *(calling out)* Mrs. Finnegan? May I have a word? *(Continues crossing to them- will approach but again hover around -They will not acknowledge her -DEENA's line should begin immediately -virtually on top of Agatha's "May I.." )*

DEENA: I knew that wasn't Clyde before. I knew he was doing it! He's done that before.

STEPHANIE: For real! He channeled a thirteen year old pygmy boy named Pico. Used to freak us out!

JOYCE: O.K. So what you're telling me is that, Clyde was.. Freddie.

DEENA: I'm sure of it. He won't admit though. But if you knew Clyde like we know Clyde, then you would know, that totally was *not* Clyde in here before.

STEPHANIE: Didn't even sound like him. Clyde doesn't talk like that. He's not that cool.

PEACHES: I have read about cases where a mortal is able to "represent" as it were, the thoughts and expressions of a spiritual entity. "Channeling" as some refer to it. An individual's life-force is actually taken over by this entity.

DEENA: Kinda like Patrick Swayze did to Whoopie Goldberg in Ghost.

STEPHANIE: Yeah, it's like they're liked.. Possessed.. But not like the Exorcist kinda possessed.. more like... like..

DEENA: Like Whoopie Goldberg in Ghost.

STEPHANIE: Yeah! Like that!

DEENA: That's what I just said, hello?

STEPHANIE: Duh! I know! I just didn't want her "buggin out", thinking that it was some kinda "Linda Blair pea soup" possessed. Though, that would be kinda cool.

DEENA: Uh..no, it wouldn't!

PEACHES: Girls, I think she understands.

JOYCE: I do. I understand that. I'm just not sure I understand what *he* was trying to tell us. (*Clyde enters*)

DEENA: (*Sees Clyde*) Clyde!

*Clyde crosses to them.*

STEPHANIE: Wait, which one is he now? Please don't tell me he's that pygmy boy Pico, that one freak me out.

DEENA: Which one are you?

CLYDE: I'm.. Me. Clyde

PEACHES: Were you channeling before?

CLYDE: Channeling?

JOYCE: Was it Fred?

PEACHES: Were you letting Fred work through you?

CLYDE: I... I don't know. I don't really remember much. DEENA: Is he still *in there*? (*moves up close -looking in Clyde's eyes*)

CLYDE: Is who in where?

DEENA: (*knocks on Clyde's head*) Hello? Freddie? Freddie are you in there?

CLYDE: Ow. I have a headache. I need to sit down.

JOYCE: Clyde, we need to know. What did he say? Did he say anything to you?

CLYDE: Did *who* say anything?

PEACHES: A lot of people who channel, don't recall the actual experience.

CLYDE: I don't recall the actual experience. Though I do remember something about.. a bartender. This old.. Bar. European in nature. And a well. A wishing well. And I remember being... *pushed* down the well.

JOYCE: Pushed?

CLYDE: Yes. I think so. I was.. Making a wish or something. Standing there, looking down the.. Looking out the window.. (*as if there -leans slightly forward*)

PEACHES: Window?

RUNYON: Did he say "window"? Because I sounded like he said "well".

*(Lenny enters- at front near Joyce, Peaches, Agatha, Deena..etc. etc.- they do not see him)*

CLYDE: Yes. He was standing there.. Looking out the window... and suddenly..

LENNY: There you are!

*Clyde who was leaning forward- at the sound of Lenny's voice- falls forward -caught by whoever is in front of him - he does not fall down just forward -there should be a somewhat loud clamor -Deena & Stephanie & whoever - "Woah!" "Clyde" etc.. Loud enough to pull attention to it. At that moment - Fred enters quietly in the back or away from attention.*

JOYCE: Lenny! You scared the poor guy!

LENNY: Sorry. I was looking all over for you. I wanted to talk to you.

JOYCE: I have don't have time right now. *(to Clyde)* What were you saying about the window? He was standing there and suddenly... what?

CLYDE: I.. I don't remember.

FRED: *(Crossing forward -hitting line hard, loud -to hopefully startle everyone -except the cast)* And you see! That's the problem! I can't remember! Why can't I remember!? Why is *that* time blocked? Is this normal? I don't know. Does it happen with everyone? Was Lincoln's last memory, "Man, this is a bad play!" Was Trotsky's last thought, "Wow, what a splitting headache!" What about Socrates? What was the last thing he remembered? "Wow this wine tastes funny!"

DEENA: Are you all right Clyde?

PEACHES: Can we get you anything?

DEENA: Something to drink?

FRED: Clyde my friend. I think we we're close. We almost had it. I need to bond one more time.

CLYDE: *(to Fred)* No.

STEPHANIE: You don't want anything to drink?

CLYDE: Yes.

DEENA: You do?

FRED: Come on Clyde!

CLYDE: *(to Fred)*No!

DEENA: You don't?

CLYDE: No, I do!

STEPHANIE: You do want something?

FRED: Just for a little while.

CLYDE: (*to Fred*) I said no.

DEENA: Dude. Make up your mind. Do you want something or not.

CLYDE: Yes I do.

STEPHANIE: So, you do right?

FRED: What about your friends here? Can they do it?

CLYDE: (*to Fred*) No.

DEENA: I give up.

CLYDE: No, I do want something.

STEPHANIE: (*to Deena*) He just said he wants something right?

FRED: Can anyone else do it?

CLYDE: No.

DEENA: That's it. I'm outta here. (*Cross back to table*)

STEPHANIE: Totally. (*Crosses also*)

CLYDE: (*to Deena & Steph*) I'm not talking to you.

STEPHANIE: (*as she's crossing*) Well, we're not talking to you either.

CLYDE: No, that's not what I meant!

FRED: So, there's no one else I can bond with? No one else to channel?

JOYCE: Did you want something Clyde?

CLYDE: (*to Fred*) Maybe. (*To Joyce*) Yes, please.

FRED: Who?

JOYCE: What did you want?

CLYDE: (*points to Peaches*) Her.

JOYCE & FRED: Her?

CLYDE: Yes. She can do it.

PEACHES: Excuse me?!

RUNYON: (*coming forward*) Pardon me? Is there some innuendo here?

CLYDE: I didn't mean it like that!



FRED: She can channel?

RUNYON: How did you mean it?

CLYDE: (to Fred) She has the ability. If she would open up, she could do it well.

RUNYON: All right, that is it! You and me, outside!

CLYDE: No, I'm not talking about... I was talking to Mr Finnegan.. He wants to use her.. To bond..

RUNYON: (*grabs Clyde*) No one bonds with my doll, do you hear me?

(*Begins pulling him to doors as if to go out*)

JOYCE: Danny please!

CHIEF: What's all this then and that?

CLYDE: Please sir, it's not what you think! I was talking about Miss Crabtree's abilities.

RUNYON: What did you say? (*Stops*) Because it sounded like you said "her abilities".

CLYDE: Her natural abilities. Allowing someone inside..

RUNYON: Well, I'm allowing you "outside"! Right out the door, into the street my friend. (*Begins pulling Clyde toward doors again*)

JOYCE: Danny! Let him go!

CLYDE: Miss Crabtree! You have the ability to channel! To allow a spirit inside.

PEACHES: Channel? Me? How?

CLYDE: Clear your mind! Open up.

LENNY: Isn't this just... swell. Look at this! You know, if Fred is here, he must be loving it.

FRED: Yeah Lenny. This is real.. Keen.

LENNY: We start off with a nice respectable wake. Paying tribute to a nice guy and now we are reduced to this.

AGATHA: Speaking of being *reduced* Lenny, what was Freddie's last book about?

LENNY: His last book?

AGATHA: A political thriller, I believe you said.

LENNY: (*Shrugs*) I'm not sure. I don't know if he even started it.

FRED: Sure I started it. (*Cross to Lenny -puts hand on shoulder*) I showed you the notes.

LENNY: Wait a minute. What am I saying? He showed me the notes. It was about... a special interest group that had supernatural abilities or something.

RUNYON: Was it not that gambling short story? He was going to turn it into a full length novel.

LENNY: No, he changed it. He started something new.

AGATHA: What kind of "interest" did this group have?

LENNY: What does it matter? I mean, excuse me but.. What is the point of this?

AGATHA: Forgive me Mr. Elmore. A point of idle curiosity, that's all.

JOYCE: Well from what I remember, there was a group that wanted build an "amusement park" on some land that was once an ancient Indian burial ground.

RUNYON: So, *it was* like that short story I was telling the chief about. Only it was a "casino" these fellows were building.

JOYCE: Well, it started out being a casino but Freddie changed it. That's all I remember.

CLYDE: This Special Interest group got their supernatural powers from the spirits of a rival Indian tribe. It was a matter of revenge. One ancient tribe exacting vengeance on the other through the means of modern day zoning laws. Disruption of hallowed ground with the triteness of an 'amusement park'.

LENNY: How did you know that?

FRED: Yeah, how did you know that? Hey! Were you peeking around in my thoughts?

CLYDE: Just a few.

LENNY: A few? A few what?

CLYDE: A few.. "things" I saw on the internet. Someone posted it on a blog. I even know the full plot of the next Transformers movie.

FRED: Really? So, what happens?

JOYCE: Why did you want to know Agatha?

AGATHA: I don't remember. Bad habit we reporters have. Always asking questions. Can't help it have the... half the... half the time. Hey, I thought I was getting some coffee. Where is it? See, I did it again. Asking a question. (*Starts crossing back to sit*) I wonder why I do that? Oh! I did it again, didn't I? Oh! There's a another one. So many questions, so little time.

CLYDE: Mr Runyon? Can I go sit down now.

RUNYON: What did you say? "Sit down"? Did you ask me if you could sit down?

CLYDE: Yes. May I sit down? I have a headache.

RUNYON: Was I not upset with you for some reason? I seem to recall that I was.

CLYDE: I don't believe so.

RUNYON: You do not believe so? (*A few beats*) All right. You may sit down.

*Clyde crosses to sit*

FRED: (*to Clyde as he crosses*) I still think you were peeking around my thoughts. How come I couldn't get into yours?

PEACHES: (*crossing to Runyon*) Because he was blocking them.

FRED: Oh.

PEACHES: Shall we go sit back down Daniel?

RUNYON: Sure doll.

FRED: Hey. Wait a minute!

PEACHES: I'm just going to.. Powder my nose. I'll be right back. (*Cross to exit*)

FRED: Hey! You heard me.

RUNYON: Very well. (*Crosses back to sit*)

*FRED follows PEACHES out the doors as OFFICER FRANCIS brings a cup of coffee to AGATHA.*

FRANCIS: Here's your coffee Miss Fletcher.

AGATHA: Oh thank you very much. Tell me, Officer uh... person, I'm curious. Was there an investigation in Mr Finnegan's death? The chief mentioned something earlier about a "theory". A theory of foul play.

FRANCIS: Is this on the record, or off?

AGATHA: Oh heavens to Betsy Officer, strictly off. I'll never remember anyway.

FRANCIS: Well, off the record, yes, there were a few theories being kicked around.

AGATHA: Really? What lead to these *theories*?

FRANCIS: Again, off the record, it was the 'plummet' itself. If someone were to 'accidentally' fall from a window, the trajectory is usually straight down. The distance between the building and the body is not that great. **But**, if the distance between the body and the building is great, one would think there a 'force' at work..

AGATHA: Like a push?

FRANCIS: Well, yeah. Like a push. But then again, you must take into consideration the nature of the 'force' applied. It could be a "push". But it could also be a "leap". Jumpers tend to push away from the building when they.. Well, you know, jump.

AGATHA: Tell me this Officer, how does one tell a *push* from a *leap*? If the end results are near the same?

FRANCIS: You can tell by the position of the body. In its final resting place. Jumpers tend to go feet first. Someone who is 'pushed', more than likely goes head first.

AGATHA: I see. So, if the autopsy shows trauma from the bottom up, jumper. From the top down... otherwise.

FRANCIS: Exactly. Of course, there are exceptions, variables. Wind conditions. Awnings. Cars. Bounce factors.

AGATHA: Of course. But our poor little Freddie, they found damage..?

FRANCIS: From the head down. And no wind conditions. No awnings. No cars.

AGATHA: Interesting.

CHIEF: Officer Francis!

FRANCIS: Yes sir?!

CHIEF: What are we doing? What's going on now? What's everyone doin'? Besides sittin' around watchin our ice cubes melt n' that.

LENNY: You're right Chief, I do apologize, we've been drifting aimlessly here for a while. If this evening were a story, there would be some major editing. There would have to be some rewrites.

AGATHA: Like what? Being a writer myself, I'm curious, what would you rewrite?

LENNY: Well, I'd... firm up the plot line a little.

AGATHA: How?

LENNY: Well, ummm .. OK for instance, if our departed friend were in fact.. "murdered". I would firm that point up. I think it would be interesting imagine that the killer is actually here.

JOYCE: And then have the spirit of the "deceased" appear at the wake, to try to convey a message.

DEENA: Yeah! But like.. Ya know, since he's a ghost and junk, he can't get anyone to see him. But there's like this one guy, this guy who he can communicate with. And he like.. takes over this guy, like... inhabits his body and stuff..

JOYCE: And relates to us the only way he knows how. Through a story. He tells a story.

LENNY: And what is *in* this story? Clues?

JOYCE: Well, maybe..

LENNY: And maybe what? It may be a *red herring*. All classic mysteries have a red herring. A ruse to throw the reader off the trail. Someone who seems very suspicious and seems to have motive, but in the end, it's all just literary fodder.

PEACHES: (*opens door part way*) Excuse me, I do beg everyone's pardon. If I could just see Clyde for a moment? We need.. I mean, *I..just me*, needs to see you out here for a moment.

*Clyde gets up and crosses to exit.*

RUNYON: What is it doll?

PEACHES: Oh it's just someone out here who had some.. questions about the Harlon Ellison scripted Star Trek episode. You know that kind of thing.

RUNYON: Oh. All right then.

CHIEF: Officer Francis? What are we doing now?

FRANCIS: Well, let's see. Mr. Elmore was 'editing' this story.

CHIEF: This *story*?

FRANCIS: Yes. If tonight were a story, a "Mystery" story. You know, like if Mr. Finnegan was pushed from the window and the killer were here tonight.. it would be..

CHIEF: *It would be* Runyon and his lot. That's who I'd bet on.

RUNYON: What did you say? Because it sounded like you said "bet" on. I would be thinking the odds would be in your favor Chiefy. You are the person running for the Mayor and you have stated your disposition to gambling.

CHIEF: Yeah? And what's that got anything to do with anything n' that?

RUNYON: As we have discussed, Freddie's books were very popular and when you are popular, you may influence friends and win people. You my friend, did not like the influence Freddie reprimanded. You may have wished him to be silent.

STEPHANIE: Silent! Exactly! If this was a Finnegan story, the killer would be silent. A ghost. I've read enough of his books to know they

would have found the room locked! No way for anyone to get in. He had the only key. But yet, someone or something came into the room..

CHIEF: Ah for the love of Pete! I don't wanna hear anymore talk about soul seeking zombies!! Why do you people insist on bringing all this stuff up all the time?

JOYCE: Because Chief, there are too many unanswered questions.

CHIEF: Questions? Huh? Like what?

JOYCE: Like how did Freddie really die?

CHIEF: He fell out the window.

JOYCE: But you said there may have been foul play.

CHIEF: And I said I got people looking into it.

LENNY: What have they found?

CHIEF: Well, they have .. they've been looking into.. the uh..

DANNY: They have been looking into the "poll" results. They have not been looking into any foul play.

CHIEF: That's not true Runyon! I know a lot of guys down at the precinct are investigation the foul play and all like that.

AGATHA: And what have you and these "guys" learned Chief?

CHIEF: You said you had guys lookin' into it too!

LENNY: What have you learned Dorothy? I have learned that we have a lot of questions.

*(Peaches Enters)*

RUNYON: Yes. And I for one have a question. *(to Peaches)* Where have you been?

PEACHES: I had to help someone. A friend in need.

RUNYON: A friend indeed! Who were you helping?

PEACHES: I'll answer that in just a moment, but first I have a question.

LENNY: A question? Well, you've come to the right wake!

PEACHES: It goes without saying that any social even where people are gathered under conjecture and supposition, well it's going to cause "unrest". And it is that very 'unrest' that is based in mystery and speculation. The bi-product is going to cause "questions."

LENNY: So, what do we do?

PEACHES: Well, normally this can be alleviated with inquiry. But the dichotomy of this setting: a "wake". against the "impulse to question" , the social mores of paying "respect" and "honoring" the departed in a quiet reserved nature, against the urge to be disruptive and to probe the truth. So, to relieve this pent up pressure, we must go with our impulse and "do it".

RUNYON: Pardon me doll, but I take issue with your vernacular.

PEACHES: It's all right Danny, I can handle it.

RUNYON: That is what I am afraid of.

CHIEF: Officer Francis! If she starts any of her "be-bop-a shimmy-shimmy-coco-pops", run her in, This ain't the sort of place for that.

LENNY: So, Peaches, what do we do?

PEACHES: We get some key facts. Officer Francis, did anyone by chance get a copy of the phone records from the Park Plaza?

FRANCIS: Yes as a matter of fact. I remember because there were only two calls. Both outgoing. One to Random House and one to the Finnegan house.

PEACHES: How did Freddie know the people he was suppose to meet had canceled?

JOYCE: Because they left a message at the front desk.

LENNY: And this is the part where someone says, "So, you were the only one who actually had motive to go to Freddie's room."

PEACHES: Excuse me Mr. Elmore, but it also stands to reason, if you had known that Freddie was dumping you, you would also have motive to go to the Park Plaza.

LENNY: Key phrase, "had I known". But I didn't. End of sentence. In a story this would be a nice little sub-plot. The jealous editor, I admit, it's good, but in this story I had no motive.

DEENA: I have a question! Where is Clyde?

CLYDE: (enters) Excuse me, Miss Crabtree?

DEENA: Clyde! What are you doing? Get over here!

CHIEF: Officer Francis! What are we doing? Get over here! What kind of game are we playing here and that?

JOYCE: Game! That's it! Freddie's favorite old parlor game! Remember? Anytime he would get stuck on one of his stories, he would have a big party. He would make each guest a 'character' in his story. A suspect. We would then ask each other questions. It would help him get ideas about the plot.

FREDDIE: (*enters*) Finally! I was sure you would get it from the Finneas Flanagan story! The old Mystery game!

JOYCE: We'll just be who we are. We'll use the real circumstances and we'll interrogate each other.

CHIEF: Interrogate? If there's gonna be any interrogatin' goin' on, I'm gonna be doin' that there stuff.

RUNYON: Sorry Chiefy, we do not have any phone books for you to use. You will have to beat the answers out of us with simple questions. Such as, where were you last Saturday evening around 9:30?

CHIEF: Huh?

JOYCE: Last Saturday. Around 9:30.

CHIEF: Me? Oh, uh.. let's see. Last Saturday, last.. Saturday. Where was I? Probably at home.

RUNYON: Asleep in your Bark-O-Lounger? With a bucket of chicken in one arm and a liter of diet Squirt in the other?

CHIEF: I don't recall.

FRANCIS: Sir, you were at your "fund raiser" remember? In the ballroom of the Park Plaza.

JOYCE: The Park Plaza?

CHIEF: Right! Right. The fund raiser.

FRANCIS: I can speak for the Chief and tell you, we had no idea Mr. Finnegan was staying at the same hotel. We didn't know.. well, until the end.

AGATHA: So, Chief Wambaugh *was there* that night!

FRANCIS: That's right. You should remember that Miss Fletcher. You were covering the event.

AGATHA: I was? Oh that's right I was! Purely in a reporting nature. It was a very short lived nature.

FRED: This is good! I have little inklings coming back to me now, But I don't recall Chief or Agatha.

LENNY: So, Chief and Agatha were at the very hotel in question on the very night in question. Joyce was at home. I was at home. Where was everyone else? (*addressing a nearby table*) How about you?

JOYCE: Let's expand the game. Does anyone here want to play interrogator? Would anyone like to ask anyone a question?

*At this point you may have to encourage the audience to ask questions of the characters. History has taught they may be slow to start, but once*



*they begin rolling they can be difficult to stop. Field as many questions as you wish and it is best to contain it by narrowing the numbers down such as.. "Two more questions, one more question." Also, the audience may want to question "Freddie". To get around this, have Lenny or Joyce point out that Freddie is in fact dead and asking him a question may prove difficult. If they insist, the actor playing Clyde may attempt to channel an answer from Freddie, but again only use this if necessary.*  
*To wrap up the question-*

LENNY: Well, I can certainly see why some of you aren't published.  
(comment on some issues brought up by the audience) Well, Dr. Peaches, have we cleared the social air? Is our collective conscious clear now?

CHIEF: I have a question! What happened with this business with the Flanagan fella?

LENNY: Flanagan fella? What Flanagan fella?

CHIEF: The bartender they found in the well n' that.

FRANCIS: Sir, that was just a story.

LENNY: An analogy.

CHIEF: I don't have any allergies, I was just wondering who threw the little guy down the well.

AGATHA: And we're trying to find out who threw little Freddie from the window!

CHIEF: I'll bet they're linked! Mark my words! You find out who pushed the Flanagan, you'll find out who pushed the Finnegan!

JOYCE: Why don't we vote?

LENNY: Vote?

CHIEF: Fine idea!

RUNYON: They're not voting for Mayor Chiefy. You can just simmer your arterial motives.

JOYCE: It was also part of the game we would play. After we did the interrogation we would take a piece of paper and write down who we thought "did it".

LENNY: And then what?

JOYCE: And then we collect them and see who people voted for.

LENNY: Oh. I see. And then whoever wins the popular vote gets run in by officer Francis? "What did you do last night Bob?" "Well, I went to a wake, we played a game took a vote and I got thrown into jail on suspicion of murder.

JOYCE: No Lenny, it's just in good fun.

LENNY: I'm sure Fred would appreciate the fact that we're having "fun" at his wake.

FRED: It's about time. You guys were so mopey over at the funeral parlor, I almost had second thoughts about coming here tonight.

LENNY: All right fine. Let's vote.

JOYCE: I think everyone has a piece of paper at their table. Just take a pen or pencil and write down the name of your prime suspect.

*You may add any special voting arrangements here that will fit or accommodate your production. In the original production, cast members assisted in collecting the votes. Fred should fade out of the room.*