

# 1001 ZOMBIE NIGHTS

by Michael Soetaert

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ISBN: 978-1-61588-559-6

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# 1001 ZOMBIE NIGHTS

*A Full Length Collection of Zombie-Themed Plays*

**by Michael Soetaert**

*Based on nothing that is even remotely true.*

**SYNOPSIS:** It's *1001 Zombie Nights*, just like the classic Arabian tales, only with zombies. For those of you who can't get enough of those loveable zombies, here's one thousand and one zombie stories, give or take several hundred, for an evening full of brain-noshing, zombie-loving fun. All of the stories can be performed with as few as 16 actors, or as many as you can possibly put on your stage. Hey, we're flexible. *1001 Zombie Nights*, brought to you by Nozombia, for the treatment of mild to moderately-severe zombie-ism. Ask your doctor if being normal is right for you.

**DURATION:** 90 minutes.

**TIME:** An indeterminate future.

**SETTING:** In and around the small town of Rainsford, not too far from the Zombie Holiday Wildlife Refuge. Or, really, anywhere you want it to be. It can be customized for your own area.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(5-11 females, 4-7 males, 7-29 either)*

### ACT ONE:

#### SCENE 1 – INTRODUCTION

DR. ATWOOD MCGUFFIN (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

#### SCENE 2 – TAG! YOU'RE IT!

MARTINEZ (m/f)

POLLARD (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

#### SCENE 3 – ZOMBIE ALERT UPDATE #1

ANNOUNCER (m/f)

EMILY FISCHER (m/f)

**SCENE 4 – BRAINS**

RILEY (m/f)

MCCORD (m/f)

**SCENE 5 – ZOMBIE ALERT UPDATE #2**

ANNOUNCER (m/f)

EMILY FISCHER (m/f)

DREW GREENE (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 6 – PIECE OF MIND**

DR. CRANKHOFF (m/f)

MRS. CLARKE (f)

**SCENE 7 – ZOMBIE ALERT UPDATE #3**

ANNOUNCER (m/f)

EMILY FISCHER (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 8 – INTERVIEW WITH A ZOMBIE**

DAVID MCNEAL (m/f)

XAVIER YOUNG (m/f)

**SCENE 9 – NOZOMBIA COMMERCIAL**

LINDSEY HAWTHORNE (m/f)

OFFSTAGE VOICE(S) (m/f)

FRIEND (m/f)

**SCENE 10 – ANOTHER DAY, STILL NO ZOMBIES**

VAL (f)

HOWARD (m)

**SCENE 11 – PRE-INTERMISSION**

DR. MCGUFFIN (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

**ACT TWO:****SCENE 1 – POST-INTERMISSION**

DR. MCGUFFIN (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 2 – THE CASE OF THE MISSING BRAINS**

BARONESS BULFROY (f)

SIR RODNEY RODDERQUE (m/f)

LADY GUPPYHAM (f)

SIR FREDERICK FULLERFLUFF (m)

LORD MUFFLEFLAT (m)

CHIEF INSPECTOR WOAHFINCH (m/f)

LEON THE GARDNER (m/f)

**SCENE 3 – RENT-A-ZOMBIE COMMERCIAL**

JENINE (m/f)

ROD(m/f)

**SCENE 4 – GENTLE AS A KITTEN**

DIEDRE (f)

ZENITH (f)

COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 5 – MAKING MONEY OFF THE MISERY OF OTHERS  
COMMERCIAL**

EDDIE WAINWRIGHT (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 6 – ZOMBIES ARE PEOPLE, TOO**

MARY BETH MONTGOMERY (f)

GERALD LETREC (m)

DORIS LETREC (f)

**SCENE 7 – ZOMBIE WORLD COMMERCIAL**

ANDREW (m/f)

ROD (m/f)

COLIN(m/f)

**SCENE 8 – A NO-BRAINER**

MAYOR MARJORIE ECSTRA (m/f)  
MR. LANDRY COOPER (m/f)  
HANNAH APPLEWEIGHT (m/f)  
SHARON STOPPLESTOFF (m/f)  
CARL FOOTH (m/f)  
ROD LARGENT (m/f)  
COLIN BLUNDSTONE (m/f)  
DORIS LETREC (f)  
LEON GARDNER (m/f)

**SCENE 9 – RAINSFORD ESTATES COMMERCIAL**

CAMILIA (m/f)  
ROD (m/f)  
COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 10 – DISCOUNT ZOMBIES**

RICHARD (m)  
GARY (m/f)  
STU (m)  
GLENDA (f)  
MARK (m/f)  
ALISHA (m/f)  
FRANKLIN (m)  
CARLA (f)  
ROD (m/f)  
COLIN (m/f)

**SCENE 11 – ZOMBIE GAME PARK/CONCLUSION**

BILL (m/f)  
STAGEHAND (m/f)  
ROD (m/f)  
COLIN (m/f)  
MCGUFFIN (m/f)  
FULL COMPANY

**OPTIONAL DOUBLING**

There is a myriad number of combinations for doubling. The following is simply a suggestion for using 16 actors:

EITHER: Rod

EITHER: Colin

EITHER: McGuffin; All Voices Off

EITHER: Mark, Emily Fischer, David McNeal, Chief Inspector Woahfinch

EITHER: Alisha, Riley, Xavier Young, Drew Greene

EITHER: Bill, McCord, Lindsey Hawthorne

EITHER: Stagehand, Dr. Crankhoff, Friend

FEMALE: Zenith, Carla, Mayor Ecstra

FEMALE: Baroness Bulfroy, Mary Beth Montgomery, Hannah Appleweight

FEMALE: Lady Guppyham, Doris LeTrec

FEMALE: Diedre, Glenda, Sharon Stopplestoff

FEMALE: Val, Camilia, Mrs. Clarke

MALE: Howard, Richard, Landry, Sir Rodney Rodderque

MALE: Sir Fredrick Fullerfluff, Stu, Carl

MALE: Lord Muffleflat, Franklin, Pollard

MALE: Gerald LeTrec, Leon, Gary, Martinez

**SETS**

It is not necessary to build detailed sets, but at a minimum you will need a free-standing door flat. Ideally, you would have a complete wall Stage Right. It would include a practical door that can be “masked” for different purposes, such as a vault door or a typical front door. On that flat you could hang a fake window, pictures, or nothing, depending on the set. And if that wall is set back just far enough, it can be covered with the Right Wing Drapes during those skits that shouldn’t have a door in them.

**DETAILED PRODUCTION NOTES  
ARE AT THE END OF THE SCRIPT**

## ACT ONE, SCENE 1

### INTRODUCTION

**AT START:** *As the play opens, the curtains are closed. After dropping the house lights, bring up a soft spot on DR. ATWOOD MCGUFFIN, as he steps through the Center curtains onto the apron.*

**MCGUFFIN:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I'm Dr. Atwood McGuffin, Professor Emeritus of Fictional Literature and Assorted Nonsense at the Westside Community College and Convenience Store. I would like to welcome you to this evening's production of *1001 Zombie Nights*, which is like the classic Arabian tale, only with zombies. It's a wonderful production, and what promises to be a fun-filled evening for young and old alike, chocked full of blood and guts and people dying horrible deaths... and then coming back to life again to kill even more people. *(A pensive beat.)* Perhaps Nietzsche said it best when he wrote: "The living is a species of the dead; and not a very attractive one." The gestalt of which is clearly elucidated as the undead, which is personified in the prototype of the zombie, a "species of the dead," if you will. Or, as Carl Jung more succinctly exemplified while nullifying the dichotomy first postulated by Freud in an attempt to expound upon the archetypal representation of the ying and the yang with the ping and the pong when he initially hypothesized...

*On the above lines, ROD and COLIN, who are zombies, have entered on the Left Apron, acting like your typical Romero zombies.*

**ROD and COLIN:** *(Loudly, as only zombies can; interrupting MCGUFFIN.)* Play! Play!

**MCGUFFIN:** *(To ROD and COLIN.)* That was *not* your cue. *(To the audience, not quite so professorial.)* Everybody's so worried about the "Zombie Apocalypse," as if it's not a foregone conclusion. I mean, they have teeth. We have automatic weapons. How do you think that's going to turn out? You take your typical zombie...

**ROD and COLIN:** *(Even louder; still as zombies; shuffling toward MCGUFFIN.)* Get on with it! Get on with it!

**MCGUFFIN:** Oh, fine! Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you *1001 Zombie Nights...* (*Aside.*) more or less.

*Drop the lights on the curtain as MCGUFFIN exits Right and ROD and COLIN exit Left.*

## ACT ONE, SCENE 2 DISCOUNT ZOMBIES

*After a beat, bring up the main drapes, exposing the inside of the Zombie Holiday Wildlife Refuge. Bring up muted lights. After all, it is night. To the Right is a sheer wall, into which is set a service entrance. Stage Left are trees and darkness. The door opens, and MARTINEZ steps out. He closes the door behind him and stands there impatiently looking at his watch. After a moment or two, POLLARD enters with a pair of really nasty coveralls over his arm.*

**MARTINEZ:** You Pollard?

**POLLARD:** Yeah.

**MARTINEZ:** I'm Martinez. They got us working together tonight.

**POLLARD:** Yeah. Whatever.

**MARTINEZ:** You do realize when we're out here, on this side of that door, we're in the actual refuge?

**POLLARD:** Yeah?

**MARTINEZ:** You do realize there are unrestrained zombies out here?

**POLLARD:** With all the signs inside, it would be hard not to.

**MARTINEZ:** You need to take this seriously. There's no room for error out here.

*POLLARD just shrugs as if to say he gets it, already.*

**MARTINEZ:** You ever tag zombies?

**POLLARD:** Oh, yeah. Sure. At my last job as a cashier in a convenience store they had me doing it all the time.

**MARTINEZ:** I'm not kidding. This isn't a joking matter.

**POLLARD:** (*Annoyed.*) No. I ain't never tagged no zombie. What do you think?

**MARTINEZ:** *(Trying his best to ignore POLLARD'S sarcasm.)* Most people don't like tagging zombies, because you got to go inside the compound... with the zombies. But these zombies out here are so well fed, they'll hardly even notice us. And that's if we weren't wearing these.

*MARTINEZ pats his chest, calling attention to the really nasty looking coveralls he's wearing.*

**POLLARD:** *(Obviously dealing with a pretty foul smell.)* What is that?

**MARTINEZ:** It's a Dead Suit.

**POLLARD:** What?

**MARTINEZ:** Just like the one you got.

**POLLARD:** *(Taking a quick sniff of the coveralls he has draped over his arm, and reacting appropriately.)* That is nasty!

**MARTINEZ:** Yeah, it is. But you'll get used to it. They put the coveralls in with rotting body parts. Makes you smell like you're dead. You wear one of these, the zombies will walk right past you. But don't ever turn your back on 'em.

**POLLARD:** You want me to put this on?

**MARTINEZ:** You can do what you want, but don't expect me to dress you. And don't expect the zombies to ignore you if you're not wearing it.

*POLLARD, trying to avoid touching anything too disgusting, slowly starts putting his dead suit on.*

**MARTINEZ:** See, the thing is, once we're out here, nobody really knows where we are. As long as we tag at least one zombie, we pretty much don't have to do jack squat for the rest of the night. Heck, we probably won't work a solid hour all night long. Like I say, it's a pretty cush job, aside from the zombies. You ready?

*POLLARD, having finished putting on his dead suit, nods.*

**MARTINEZ:** They don't have cameras out here. It'd be too expensive, and the zombies keep knocking them down. Don't know why. So we tag the zombies. That way they can track them on radar... or something like that. Mostly they just use the tags for their regular census counts. But they do have an added bonus. Did you notice the sensors around the door?

**POLLARD:** Yeah?

**MARTINEZ:** They've got sensors going all the way around the park. Over forty miles of sensors. See, the chips we put in the zombies have little explosives embedded in them. Not much, but enough to blow a zombie in two. If they ever go through the sensors... Pow! It won't kill them. I mean, they're zombies. But they're not going anywhere. *(Beat.)* You good about working nights?

**POLLARD:** Yeah.

**MARTINEZ:** They say you get used to it, but I never have. But the thing is, we can probably both catch a couple hours' sleep... as long as one of us stays awake and keeps an eye out.

**POLLARD:** I'm really fine.

**MARTINEZ:** We'll see about that around three in the morning. That's when it always gets the hardest for me. I'd much rather work days, but then I'd actually have to work. We tag the zombies at night because they don't want the paying customers seeing us. They say it ruins their experience if they realize the zombies aren't dangerous in the least. They were all tagged when they came in, but the batteries in the tag only last about three years. So every two years we re-tag 'em. It usually takes about two years to tag them all. Which means we're pretty much re-tagging them constantly. It's job security. You getting all this?

**POLLARD:** Yeah.

**MARTINEZ:** So, yeah. That's what we're doing. Re-tagging. When we find a zombie, we scan it with this.

*MARTINEZ pulls from his pocket a device that looks like a handheld inventory scanner.*

**MARTINEZ:** If they have two chips in 'em, they've already been re-chipped. If they only have one, we tag 'em.

**POLLARD:** How do we do that?

*MARTINEZ steps back over by the door and picks up a pole that's about four feet long. One end has a slide pump like might be found on a BB gun. The other end has a handle of sorts.*

**MARTINEZ:** We chip them with this pole thing here. *(Demonstrating.)*

You hold this end, and hit the zombie in the back with this end. The thing is spring loaded. You cock it with this handle here, and when you hit them on the back, Bam! It triggers it. *(He presses it against the ground and it sounds with a "pop".)*

**POLLARD:** That's it?

**MARTINEZ:** Well, it has to have a chip in it. *(He takes a chip out of his pocket; demonstrating.)* You put a chip in the end right here, right in that hole. It's pretty foolproof. It only goes in one way. And when you trigger this thing, it's gonna drive that chip in about an inch... *(Touching POLLARD'S lower back with his hand.)* ...right there in that muscle.

**POLLARD:** Doesn't that hurt them?

**MARTINEZ:** Who cares? They're zombies.

**POLLARD:** Can it fall out?

**MARTINEZ:** Heck, no. It's got these little barbs. See? The barbs go in, but they don't come out. Besides, if it comes out, it's supposed to detonate. I'm not really sure how that works. I ain't never seen it.

**POLLARD:** And that's it?

**MARTINEZ:** Yeah. That's pretty much it. Once that baby's triggered, the chip's activated. And then we go find another zombie. We can take turns. One of us distracts the zombie, the other tags him. But, really, most of the time they don't need to be distracted.

**POLLARD:** Can I see it?

**MARTINEZ:** *(Handing him the "stick".)* Yeah, but be careful.

**POLLARD:** I put the chip in here...

*POLLARD holds his hand out for a chip, which MARTINEZ gives him, and then he puts the chip in the "stick".*

**MARTINEZ:** That's right.

**POLLARD:** *(As he pumps it.)* And then I pump this handle like this...

**MARTINEZ:** Yeah.

**POLLARD:** And then I just hit that end against the zombie and it's tagged.

*POLLARD does not hit it against anything, but it's still loaded and cocked.*

**MARTINEZ:** See? I told you it wasn't hard.

**POLLARD:** That's not a very long handle. Won't we have to get in really close?

**MARTINEZ:** Yeah, and they don't like it. But check this out. See? It telescopes.

*While POLLARD is still holding the stick, MARTINEZ pulls it out, moving away from POLLARD.*

**MARTINEZ:** See? I could be standing all the way over here, and you can still tag me.

*POLLARD tags MARTINEZ in his upper thigh with a "pop." MARTINEZ immediately hits the ground, writhing in pain and making owie sounds. I mean, just imagine how much that would hurt.*

**MARTINEZ:** *(Finally, but still obviously in great pain.)* You tagged me!

**POLLARD:** *(Not convincing.)* Sorry.

**MARTINEZ:** *(Struggling to his feet; MARTINEZ will walk with a bit of a limp for the rest of the play, kind of like a zombie might walk; not happy.)* You tagged me!

**POLLARD:** I said I was sorry.

**MARTINEZ:** You did that on purpose!

**POLLARD:** No, I didn't.

**MARTINEZ:** *(Crossing to POLLARD.)* Yes, you did. Give that back to me!

*MARTINEZ snatches the "stick" out of POLLARD'S hand and collapses it back down.*

**POLLARD:** Look, man. I did not do that on purpose. So quit being such a baby.

**MARTINEZ:** A baby? You're calling me a baby?!

**POLLARD:** Well, you *are* acting like one.

*MARTINEZ quickly reloads the "stick," and then re-cocks it.*

**MARTINEZ:** Well, fine! Let's see how you like it!

*MARTINEZ then tags POLLARD in the leg, and he, too, shouts and falls down in pain. Like MARINEZ, POLLARD will walk with a zombie-esque limp for the rest of the play.*

**MARTINEZ:** See. Look who's the baby now!

**POLLARD:** *(Finally.)* You tagged me!

**MARTINEZ:** Yes, I did.

**POLLARD:** That really hurts!

**MARTINEZ:** I told you it did, but you wouldn't believe me.

*POLLARD, with a sudden realization, gets back up and limps over to MARTINEZ, where he frisks him.*

**MARTINEZ:** What are you doing?

**POLLARD:** *(Taking the scanner out of MARTINEZ'S pocket; after trying to figure it out.)* How do you turn this thing on?

**MARTINEZ:** *(Starting to realize the same thing.)* It's the red button on the side.

*MARTINEZ takes the scanner back from POLLARD, switches it on, and then scans both of them.*

**MARTINEZ:** It thinks we're zombies.

**POLLARD:** Yeah? What does that mean?

**MARTINEZ:** It means we're tagged. Just like the zombies.

**POLLARD:** So?

**MARTINEZ:** So?! Don't you get it?

**POLLARD:** Get what?

**MARTINEZ:** It means we can't leave.

**POLLARD:** What? There's the door.

**MARTINEZ:** *We can't leave.* If we try to go out that door, the chips will explode.

**POLLARD:** But...

**MARTINEZ:** Shut up. Just don't say a word.

**POLLARD:** Really? You're going to be that way? I accidentally tagged you, but you tagged me on purpose, so now you're going to cop an attitude? Quit being such a jerk.

**MARTINEZ:** You don't understand. We're trapped in here.

**POLLARD:** What? We can just call somebody.

**MARTINEZ:** How? We ain't got no radio.

**POLLARD:** *(Taking out a cellphone.)* I'll just use my phone.

**MARTINEZ:** Good luck with that.

**POLLARD:** *(Tries to get service, but after holding it up and walking around a bit realizes there is none.)* Why won't it work?

**MARTINEZ:** It's because there's no cell service in here. What? Do you think they're going to pay for wi-fi so the zombies can play on their phones? The only way we can contact anybody is with the landline, which is on the wall... on the *other side* of that door.

**POLLARD:** Won't they notice us missing at the end of our shift? When we don't clock out?

**MARTINEZ:** Are you serious? People quit here all the time. We're getting paid minimum wage to wear clothing that makes us smell like we're dead so we can poke zombies with a stick. Most people quit before the first break. How many of them do you suppose clocks out?

**POLLARD:** Some probably do.

**MARTINEZ:** You don't get it. They won't care if either of us don't clock out. They won't even notice we're missing until we don't pick up our next supply of chips.

**POLLARD:** When will that be?

**MARTINEZ:** We have a two-month's supply. And even then, it will probably take a week or two before anybody gets concerned.

**POLLARD:** Wait! When do we get paid?

**MARTINEZ:** What? You got plans?

**POLLARD:** I was thinking... won't they notice when we don't pick up our checks?

**MARTINEZ:** You tryin' to be funny?

**POLLARD:** No.

**MARTINEZ:** You really think they're going to be concerned if they don't have to pay us?

**POLLARD:** Maybe they'll notice two extra zombies next time they scan.

**MARTINEZ:** Who knows? And even if they do, that won't be until the end of the month. That's in three weeks. And even at that, they probably still won't care.

*ROD and COLIN, two zombies, have wandered on stage Up Left, unnoticed by POLLARD and MARTINEZ. Over the next few lines they will move a bit closer to POLLARD and MARTINEZ, but not be threatening in the least. If anything, it's almost as if they're trying to listen in on their conversation... but zombies can't do that. Can they?*

**POLLARD:** So, you're tellin' me we gotta wait at least two weeks before anybody is even going to think about letting us out of here?

**MARTINEZ:** Probably closer to three.

**POLLARD:** Couldn't we just yell at some of the customers to send help?

**MARTINEZ:** What? And get fired? We'd be canned for sure.

**POLLARD:** I don't care if I get fired. This job sucks.

**MARTINEZ:** Well, I do. I got bills.

**POLLARD:** What? You want me to stay in here for two weeks so you can pay your cable bill? I don't think so.

**MARTINEZ:** We're *not* waving at the customers.

**POLLARD:** All right, then, what do you suggest?

**MARTINEZ:** Well... we could blend in.

**POLLARD:** What?

**MARTINEZ:** We'll act like zombies. Whenever they send the new guys in, we'll... we'll figure something out.

**POLLARD:** Screw that. You can blend in if you want, but I'm getting the heck out of here.

**ROD:** Don't do that.

*POLLARD and MARTINEZ are a bit taken aback. I mean, it's not every day that a zombie talks to you. ROD and COLIN cross to POLLARD and MARTINEZ.*

**POLLARD:** You... you talked.

**COLIN:** Ain't he the smart one?

**MARTINEZ:** (*Stepping back from ROD and COLIN; holding up his stick to defend himself.*) What's going on here?! Zombies can't talk.

**ROD:** Who said we was zombies?

**MARTINEZ:** If you're not zombies, what are you doing in here?

**COLIN:** Same thing you are, brother. Tryin' to earn a living.

**POLLARD:** With a bunch of zombies runnin' around? Are you insane?

**ROD:** What? Zombies? Ain't you figured it out yet? There ain't no zombies. There ain't been no zombies for goin' on a long time now.

**MARTINEZ:** But I've seen zombies in here.

**COLIN:** What you saw was people just like us.

**MARTINEZ:** You?

**COLIN:** Maybe, who knows. There's a lot of us in here. But no zombies. No real zombies.

**ROD:** What? Did you think the zombies were going to live forever? It's just us bumping into each other. The guards on the walls. The bullet-proof glass. The gift shop. You guys in here tryin' to tag us. It's just smoke and mirrors.

**POLLARD:** Why?

**ROD:** You serious? You skipped a lot of school, didn't ya? It's all about money. People are willing to pay—a *lot*—to see zombies, and they don't know the difference. We're just giving the people what they want.

**COLIN:** Listen, buddy. We got a good thing goin' here. We got a place to stay. Regular meals.

**POLLARD:** What? Raw cow brains?

**ROD:** My mama raised me not to be critical of free food.

**COLIN:** Wise woman.

**ROD:** Thank you.

**COLIN:** Any way you look at it, this is a pretty good gig. We got a place to stay. Good company.

**ROD:** Thank you.

**COLIN:** You're welcome. And all we have to do is stumble around for a couple hours a day. You go jumpin' up and down in front of the marks shoutin', (*In a funny voice.*) "Help me! Help me!" You're gonna make a lot of people unhappy real fast. And you don't want that.

**POLLARD:** But we don't want to stay in here.

**MARTINEZ:** Hey, speak for yourself.

**POLLARD:** Well, I ain't gonna do it.

**COLIN:** Seriously?

**ROD:** C'mon. What do you have better on the outside?

**POLLARD:** (*Hesitant.*) Well...

**ROD:** You ain't kiddin' no one. If you took a job taggin' zombies, then your life really has to suck.

**COLIN:** Trust me. You ain't missin' nothin' on cable.

**ROD:** Or the internet.

**COLIN:** There's no politics or manufactured drama in here.

**ROD:** We got no bills to pay.

**COLIN:** No taxes.

**ROD:** Nobody to call sir or ma'am.

**COLIN:** Nobody telling us what to do or when to do it.

**ROD:** We don't even care about the weather.

**COLIN:** All I'm sayin' is, we got food, good company, and a warm place to spend the night. And nobody cares if you ever work again. Anyway you look at it, it's better than *anything* you ever had, or ever *will* have, on the other side of that wall.

**ROD:** So... wha' d'ya say?

**POLLARD:** Well... maybe I could stay just for a night.

**ROD:** Hey, that's the ticket. See what you think in the morning.

**MARTINEZ:** Tomorrow's another day.

**COLIN:** Exactly. Now, if you gentlemen don't mind, follow me.

*All four, walking like zombies, shuffle off stage Up Left. Drop the lights and shut the main drapes. Leave the stage in darkness for a beat.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 3**  
**ZOMBIE NEWS ALERT UPDATE #1**

**ANNOUNCER:** *(Offstage voice.)* And now a WIDK Channel 15 Apocalypse Tracker News Update.

*EMILY FISCHER has entered Down Center through the curtains. Bring up lights on her.*

**EMILY:** Good evening. This is Emily Fischer reporting live from the WIDK Channel 15 news studio with an Apocalypse Tracker live Zombie News Update. And, wow! What a day we've been having! As you know, there have been zombies coming in all day long. Everybody wants to know when we can expect some relief, and I'm afraid the answer is not for a while.

*Acting as if there's a weather map to her right, which is the main drape, and moving her hands as only a weather person could.*

**EMILY:** What we're currently experiencing is the tail-end of this rather weak wave of zombies coming up from the south. We should expect to see some clearing later on this evening throughout most of the metro area, but those of you out east along the I-84 corridor could see intermittent zombies throughout the night and even into the morning. And then, you see, if we pull back on the map here, there's another much more significant wave of zombies, also coming up from the south, part of that entire system that's already been giving Northern California all sorts of problems. We're expecting that new surge to be in our viewing area maybe as early as tomorrow afternoon. So there's really not going to be much of a break there.

*Turning to her left for an imaginary list of closures.*

**EMILY:** And as you might expect, the Zombie Apocalypse has caused numerous closures and cancelations throughout the city. *(As she ticks them off.)* Portland Public Schools has already canceled all classes for tomorrow, as well as Beaverton, Hillsboro, and Gresham, and all evening classes have been canceled at all City and Private Community Colleges. Be sure to check our website for continuous updates on any closures or cancelations throughout the metro area.

*Turning back to face the audience square on.*

**EMILY:** And, as you might expect, with everybody trying to get out of town early for the Zombie Apocalypse, it's really causing havoc for the evening commute. Let's see if we can get an update on the traffic from Drew, who is reporting live from the Moda Center, where they're still planning on playing tonight's game, Zombie Apocalypse or not. Drew? Are you there? Drew? *(Beat.)*

*EMILY holds her ear as she's waiting to hear back from DREW, which she won't.*

**EMILY:** *(Finally.)* We seem to be having technical difficulties. We'll see if we can't check in with Drew later on. *(Beat.)* Until then, Trimet reports their trains and buses are still running, although, according to officials, riders should expect significant delays. And for those of you braving the roads, O-Dot estimates there's at least a two hour wait from the Lloyd Center to the Columbia River. I'm told that Highway 26 and 30 are no better, so if you're headed to the coast, or up into the mountains, you should definitely expect delays. And if you're heading out into the Gorge this evening, you should expect delays of up to four hours. O-Dot recommends that you avoid traveling if at all possible, but if you must go out, bring lots of patience. *(Beat.)* Be sure to stay tuned to WIDK Channel 15 for further updates. Until then, we return you to our regularly scheduled broadcast. This is Emily Fischer, live, from our WIDK studios.

*The lights on EMILY drop and she will exit back through the curtains.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 4**  
**BRAINS**

*After a beat, bring up the curtain and the stage lights to show the inside an armory on an Army base. There is a large vault door to the Right. Private MCCORD is sitting on one of two “chairs” made from an upside-down five gallon bucket, leaning back against an empty shelf, doing crosswords by first reading the clue, and then looking up the answers in the back. Private RILEY enters from Left. Both RILEY and MCCORD have abandoned any sense of military bearing.*

**RILEY:** Well, McCord... we're out of food... again.

**MCCORD:** Again?

**RILEY:** What? You deaf? Maybe if I said it slower. *(And he does.)*

We're. Outta. Food. *(Beat.)* Again.

**MCCORD:** You're a jerk. You know that, Riley?

**RILEY:** Oh, please stop. You're gonna hurt my feelings.

**MCCORD:** *(Getting up and getting into RILEY'S face; ready to fight.)*

I could hurt a lot more than your feelings.

**RILEY:** *(Not backing down.)* You feel froggy... *(Giving MCCORD a soft push on his chest with both hands.)* ...jump.

*They both take a step toward each other with fists ready and hateful stares. After a few moments both of them back down.*

**MCCORD:** *(Saving pride.)* You ain't worth the effort.

**RILEY:** *(Also saving pride.)* Whenever you're ready, brother. You just say the word.

**MCCORD:** Oh, you don't have to worry about that.

**RILEY:** I don't worry about you at all.

**MCCORD:** Of all the people I had to be trapped with inside this stupid armory, why did it have to be you?

**RILEY:** Like it's been any picknick being stuck in here with you. Only there ain't no picknick if there ain't no food.

**MCCORD:** How can we possibly be out of food?

**RILEY:** Because we ate it all, you nimrod. That's how it works.

**MCCORD:** Well, maybe we'd still have some if you weren't such a pig.

**RILEY:** I'm not the only one eating, you know. You're no stranger to seconds. And thirds.

**MCCORD:** Well, what are we going to do?

**RILEY:** I don't know!

**MCCORD:** None of this would've happened, you know, if you hadn't started it all.

**RILEY:** I didn't start nothin'!

**MCCORD:** Like heck! It was your idea.

**RILEY:** I was only saying what everybody else was already thinking.

**MCCORD:** And you just had to pick Captain Martin to eat first, didn't you? Just because he was an officer.

**RILEY:** I didn't hear anybody vote, "No."

**MCCORD:** Except for Captain Martin.

**RILEY:** He doesn't count. We didn't let him vote.

**MCCORD:** *(While crossing Right to the door.)* Captain Martin, the only person who knew the code... to the keypad... that opens the only door *out* of this room!

**RILEY:** Oh, give it a rest! We wouldn't be in this room at all if it wasn't for you. *(With a bit of a goofy voice for the quotes.)* "Let's hide in the armory," you said. "The *new* armory," you said. The armory with no weapons. The armory with nothing that explodes at all! "We can lock the armory door from the inside," you said. "We'll be safe from the zombies in there," you said.

**MCCORD:** We *are* safe from the zombies in here. I didn't hear anybody else with a better idea.

**RILEY:** You call this a good idea?

**MCCORD:** It would've been a good idea if you hadn't eaten Captain Martin.

**RILEY:** Me! Don't give me that! I wasn't the only one eating. If I remember correctly, you made quite the pig out of yourself. We all did.

**MCCORD:** You're the one who suggested we eat him first.

**RILEY:** But we all voted on it.

**MCCORD:** Everybody but Captain Martin.

**RILEY:** He doesn't count!

**MCCORD:** I suppose First Sergeant Gomez doesn't count, either. Or Sergeant Winkler. Or Corporal Oswald. Or Private First Class Ameen.

**RILEY:** Hey. Those guys were chosen fair and square.

**MCCORD:** You call a wrench to the back of the head "fair and square"?

**RILEY:** Yeah, well, I didn't see you going hungry. You could've traded places with any of those guys. They wouldn't've minded.

**MCCORD:** "Let's eat the highest ranks first," you said.

**RILEY:** And everybody agreed.

**MCCORD:** Except for Captain Martin.

**RILEY:** Enough already with Captain Martin! He doesn't count. He was an officer. Everybody agreed.

**MCCORD:** Until they were the highest rank.

**RILEY:** Well, they should've thought about that before their turn came up, don't you think?

**MCCORD:** So what do we do now?

**RILEY:** It's just the two of us, brother, and we're both Buck Privates. You can't get any lower than that. And let's not go trying to figure out who's been in the longest, or who got busted in rank the most. We're not going to do that.

**MCCORD:** Fine. Then we're not going on who was up for promotion, either.

**RILEY:** Fine by me.

**MCCORD:** *(Beat.)* I guess we can always try for a few more combinations on the keypad.

**RILEY:** *(Laying the sarcasm on thick.)* What a great idea! We haven't even gotten to a million yet. Maybe we should make that our goal! Then we'd only have 200 million more possibilities to go. Or, hey! Maybe we could have a séance. And then we could ask Captain Martin why the heck he didn't tell anybody else what the stupid code was!

**MCCORD:** Maybe he didn't feel like he had to! Maybe he didn't think somebody was going to sneak up behind him and brain him with a wrench.

**RILEY:** So that's how you are? Taking an officer's side over your fellow enlisted man! I see how you are. C'mon, man, it's time to vote.

**MCCORD:** Vote? Do you think it will ever *not* end in a tie?

**RILEY:** OK, then. We'll flip a coin. *(He takes one out, ready.)*

**MCCORD:** Wait.

**RILEY:** For what? You trying to back out now?

**MCCORD:** No, man. You know I'm not that way.

**RILEY:** OK. (*Flipping the coin, then catching it and covering it all in one smooth motion... you know how.*) Then go ahead. I'll even let you call it.

**MCCORD:** No.

**RILEY:** No?

**MCCORD:** You heard me.

**RILEY:** What? You wussin' out on me? I should've known.

**MCCORD:** No! I ain't "wussin' out" on you.

**RILEY:** Then what's your problem? You want me to call it?

**MCCORD:** No. I just wanna try the pad one last time.

**RILEY:** (*As he pockets the coin.*) Like it's going to make any difference.

*MCCORD turns his back on RILEY, who immediately takes a large wrench out from where he's had it looped in his belt behind his back. MCCORD, though, quickly spins around just in time to catch RILEY with the wrench over his head, almost ready to strike.*

**MCCORD:** Don't you dare!

**RILEY:** (*Slowly lowering the wrench and then tapping it softly in his hand.*) Suit yourself, but you're just putting off the inevitable.

*MCCORD crosses to the vault door, never really taking his eyes off of RILEY. When he gets there, between constant glances back at RILEY, seemingly for the first time ever he really looks at the keypad.*

**MCCORD:** (*Finally.*) Hey, Riley.

**RILEY:** What?

**MCCORD:** You ever notice this before?

**RILEY:** What?

**MCCORD:** This button.

**RILEY:** What button? It's a key pad. It's got buttons all over it.

**MCCORD:** This red button right here? This red button that's bigger than all the rest?

**RILEY:** Yeah? What about it?

**MCCORD:** It says, "Emergency Release."

**RILEY:** The heck you say!

**MCCORD:** Then I'm sayin' it.

*RILEY crosses over, and for probably the first time as well, he truly looks at the pad.*

**RILEY:** Well, take out my brains and serve 'em on a platter. You suppose that's been here all along?

**MCCORD:** Of course it's been here all along! Do you think somebody sneaked in and put it there while we weren't looking?

**RILEY:** You know, I'm really getting tired of you.

**MCCORD:** What? Are we going to have that conversation again?

**RILEY:** *(Beat.)* Well... what do you think we ought to do?

**MCCORD:** You suppose we ought to push it?

**RILEY:** I don't know. Why not?

**MCCORD:** *(Thoughtful beat.)* What if we open the door and they're still there? What if there's still zombies waiting outside?

**RILEY:** We could just jump back inside and close the door.

**MCCORD:** But we can't lock it again without the code.

**RILEY and MCCORD:** And only Captain Martin knew the code.

**MCCORD:** What if we open the door and there's no zombies at all? What if we just imagined it?

**RILEY:** Are you serious? We didn't imagine no Zombie Apocalypse. *(Beat.)* Besides, if there was no zombies, then why hasn't somebody opened the door from the outside? *(Almost an aside.)* You know, if there ain't no zombies, we're really going to be in a lot of trouble.

**MCCORD:** *(Somber.)* Maybe we're dead.

**RILEY:** What?

**MCCORD:** Maybe we were killed and we never knew it.

**RILEY:** Oh, c'mon! I think I'd know it if I was killed. I think that's something that would stand right out there in my memory.

**MCCORD:** You say that, but how do you know? How *can* you know? Maybe we're ghosts trapped forever inside this vault, never able to be forgiven for our sins.

**RILEY:** You took Sunday School seriously, didn't you? Listen. We ain't no ghosts. And we didn't imagine no Zombie Apocalypse. The way I see it, if we open that door, then there's gonna be zombies.

**MCCORD:** Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe they got tired of waiting.

**RILEY:** Tired of waiting? Are you serious?

**MCCORD:** I don't know!

**RILEY:** That's right, you *don't* know.

**MCCORD:** Maybe... maybe they're all dead by now.

**RILEY:** How can they die? They were dead to begin with.

**MCCORD:** Maybe they starved.

**RILEY:** What? In just three days?

**MCCORD:** A lot can happen in three days.

**RILEY:** Listen. If we open that door, I'd say there's a very good chance we're gonna to be fighting zombies with nothing more than a couple of wrenches. And neither of us is very well nourished. Any way you put it, we open that door, we're dead.

**MCCORD:** Or undead.

**RILEY:** Like that's an improvement.

**MCCORD:** So that means we're back to where we started.

**RILEY:** (*Softly tapping his wrench once again in his hand.*) You and me and nothing to eat.

**MCCORD:** (*Looking RILEY up and down.*) Oh... I wouldn't say nothin'...

**RILEY:** So... are you ready to flip that coin?

**MCCORD:** Sure...

*RILEY hooks his wrench on his belt and then takes out his coin and gets ready to flip it.*

**MCCORD:** Yeah, we could flip it... or...

**RILEY:** Or?

**MCCORD:** Or we can wait.

**RILEY:** Wait? For what?!

**MCCORD:** (*Tapping his wrench in his hand.*) You can't stay awake forever.

**RILEY:** (*Taking his wrench back out and tapping it in his hand.*) Neither can you, brother. Neither can you.

*They both pull up buckets and sit down, facing each other, still lightly tapping their wrenches in their hands. Hold for a beat, and then slowly fade the lights. Curtain.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 5**  
**ZOMBIE NEWS ALERT UPDATE #2**

**ANNOUNCER:** *(Offstage voice.)* And now a WIDK Channel 15 Apocalypse Tracker News Update.

*EMILY FISCHER has once again entered Down Left through the curtains. Bring up lights on her.*

**EMILY:** *(Speaking into a microphone.)* Good evening. This is Emily Fischer reporting live from the WIDK Channel 15 News Center, where we're hoping to get a Zombie Apocalypse update live from Drew Greene out at the Moda Center. As we reported earlier, the Trailblazers are still planning on playing tonight's game against the Pistons. I'm told that fans should be advised that if they're planning on taking public transit to tonight's game, they should expect significant delays. *(Beat while touching her ear, as if she's listening to somebody else.)* I'm now told that Drew is ready to go, live from the Moda Center. *(Beat.)* Hello? Drew? Are you there?

*Bring up a light on DREW, who has entered on the Apron Down Right. DREW is holding a microphone while touching his ear, trying to hear.*

**DREW:** *(As he speaks, he'll drift toward Center, but not by much; after a beat where he's nodding his head; finally.)* That's right, Emily. I'm here at the Moda Center, where it's absolute chaos. The fans are really excited to see this match-up, which could determine a playoff spot for both teams. I've gotten reports that both teams have been infected and are now zombies, though officials have stated that that's no reason not to play. We're expecting tip-off to be on time...

*On the above lines, COLIN and ROD have entered from Right. They grab DREW, who, with a short shout, is dragged off stage.*

**EMILY:** Thank you, Drew. *(To the audience.)* That was Drew Greene, reporting dead from the Moda Center. *(Beat.)* Be sure to stay tuned to WIDK, Channel 15, for more breaking zombie news as it happens. This is Emily Fischer. We now return you to your regularly scheduled show.

*Drop the lights on the apron.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 6  
PIECE OF MIND**

*After a beat, open the curtains and bring up the lights on the "treatment" room at the Human-Again Clinic. More industrial than medical, the majority of the room is taken up with the Splice-O-Matic machine. In addition, there are two chairs and a table Down Left—the consulting area. After a beat DOCTOR CRANKHOFF enters through the door Right, along with MRS. CLARKE.*

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Right this way, please, Mrs. Clarke. I think it's so much easier explaining exactly what we do here at the Human-Again Clinic if you can see the equipment.

**MRS. CLARKE:** That's very kind of you, Dr. Crankhoff. You see, it was my daughter who insisted that I see you. You see, it's my husband, Herbert. He's a zombie. Melissa, she's my daughter, she said that you could make everything alright again. Why, you did wonders for her boy, Brett.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** That's good to hear.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Come to find out, he wasn't really a zombie after all. But after just one session... why, he looks just like a regular person. He even got a job.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Fantastic.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Of course, it wasn't at this clinic. She lives just outside of Rainsford, so she went to the one out there. But she assures me that if they can help her boy Brett there, then you could help my Herbert here.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** We certainly can.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, I'm hoping so. You see, we've tried everything, even Nozombia. Well... not actually Nozombia, but the generic brand... now, what do they call that?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Nobitem Undeadium?

**MRS. CLARKE:** Yes! That's it. It's so much cheaper. And they say there's really no difference between the two.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** There really isn't.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Still, it just seemed to make things worse.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** That is one of the side effects of Nozombia, though generally, none of the side effects are truly worse than what they already have. But, as I'm sure you already know, Nozombia isn't right for everybody. It's truly only effective in mild to moderately severe cases of Zombie-ism. And even then, it's only treating the symptoms. Even those patients who find relief with Nozombia are still zombies. And there is always the chance of regression. With our patented DNA treatment, however, we completely rid the patient of all zombie-ism. Your husband will be completely cured.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, Dr. Crankhoff! That would be wonderful! It just sounds too good to be true.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Well, Mrs. Clarke, it is good, and it is true. Let me explain. When your husband became a zombie, his DNA actually mutated. What we do is take a sample of his DNA before he got infected, say, hair from a hairbrush.

**MRS. CLARKE:** *(Taking a wad out of her handbag.)* Yes. I have that.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Wonderful.

**MRS. CLARKE:** I can get some more from the shower drain, if you need it.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** I'll keep that in mind. So once we have your husband's old DNA, we'll splice it onto a "carrier" cell and insert that cell into your husband's body. The carrier cell will then, in essence, seek out and fix all the mutated DNA by inserting the correct sequence into all the mutated segments.

**MRS. CLARKE:** That sounds quite complicated.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** *(Moving over to the machine.)* Oh, not really. We'll just hook your husband up over here. *(He shows her the seat on the Right.)* Then I just put the hair strand in here *(He shows her the small box on the front.)*, tell the computer what kinds of changes to make here *(Indicating the keyboard.)*, and it does the

rest. It takes about an hour and a half—maybe longer, depending on the complexity of any missing body parts.

*DOCTOR CRANKHOFF guides MRS. CLARKE to the chairs Down Left.*

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Please, be seated.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Thank you. (*Beat.*) This all sounds so wonderful. Is it... is it very expensive?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** That really depends on which plan you choose. Our basic plan is no more expensive than... say... a used car.

*DOCTOR CRANKHOFF takes out a small card from inside his jacket and hands it to MRS. CLARKE.*

**MRS. CLARKE:** (*Looking at the card.*) An expensive used car, I'd say.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** You get what you pay for, Mrs. Clarke. We do offer financing, with low interest rates, and easy monthly payments. Why, most of our customers say with their spouse able to return to work, they never notice the extra monthly payment.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well, it would be good to get him out from under foot.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Of course it would.

**MRS. CLARKE:** And it would be nice if he weren't always trying to bite me.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** That goes without saying. Remember, Mrs. Clarke, this is just as much for you as for your husband.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well, I suppose that's true.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Certainly. But let me ask you this: Are you content with the way your husband was?

**MRS. CLARKE:** What do you mean?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Now, keep in mind we're just supposing here. I'm sure your husband, your Herbert, was just fine before he contracted zombie-ism. A great guy. A model husband. I'm sure you liked him just the way he was.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well...

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Absolutely! But let's say, just for argument's sake... and once again, we're only supposing here, but what if... What if we could, say, make him better than before?

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** You see, the basic plan will make your husband exactly the way he used to be, every scar, every arthritic joint, every wart, and every snore.

**MRS. CLARKE:** He did snore frightfully loud.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** We can fix that.

**MRS. CLARKE:** How?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** *(Once more crossing to the machine.)* It's all controlled by DNA. We program the changes in here, and they come out here... in your husband.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Why, isn't that amazing.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** No, ma'am. It's science. But why stop there? Tell me, Mrs. Clarke, what does your husband do that annoys you? Well... before he was a zombie?

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, well...

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** C'mon, Mrs. Clarke. You can be honest with me. I'm a doctor.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well, he does snore.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Aside from the snoring.

**MRS. CLARKE:** *(Deciding.)* He leaves the seat up on the toilet.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** *(Clicking a few keys on the keyboard.)* There.

**MRS. CLARKE:** That's it?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** That's all it takes.

**MRS. CLARKE:** And that works?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Like a charm. Leaving the seat up on the toilet is part of the DNA that covers spatial reasoning, which is located in the parietal lobe of his brain.

**MRS. CLARKE:** The parietal lobe?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** *(Touching the top of her head, toward the back.)* It's right in here, more or less.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh!

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Basically, we turn off that one little part of his brain inside of the parietal lobe, and then he never leaves the seat up again.

**MRS. CLARKE:** You turn off part of his brain? That sounds serious.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** It's really not. It's just a tiny part. Most people never miss it.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well... it would be nice to go into the bathroom at night and know the seat is down.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Toilet seats are one of our more popular choices, right after snoring and infidelity.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, my Herbert has never strayed.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** And we can assure you that he never will. All it takes is shutting off a small part of the hypothalamus...

*DOCTOR CRANKHOFF crosses back to MRS. CLARKE and, after putting both hands on her head and feeling around briefly, touches a spot right above her left ear.*

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Right there.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, my.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Think of it as a piece of mind.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well... I suppose...

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Tell me, Mrs. Clarke, did your husband have any bad or annoying habits? Did he smoke or drink? Did he ever pick his nose?

**MRS. CLARKE:** Well...

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Did he go on and on, telling the same old stupid stories over and over again? Did he ever listen—really listen—to what you had to say?

**MRS. CLARKE:** (*Decisive.*) Sometimes... sometimes... He acts like such a know it all. Like it makes him so special to know the answers on *Jeopardy!*

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** These are all easy things to fix. (*He quickly pushes several keys on the console with a bit of a flair.*) There.

**MRS. CLARKE:** It's that easy?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** It's that easy. (*Beat.*) Mrs. Clarke, if I may, I'd like to offer you our deluxe package.

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, my. It sounds expensive.

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** It's not as expensive as you might think. You can save ten percent right now through the end of the month on all of our premium packages during our Spring Sale. And if you finance with us, we'll take off another ten percent. That's a total savings of twenty percent. And even if you don't need the financing, you can just pay it off in full when the first payment comes due, and there'll be no finance charges.

**MRS. CLARKE:** That would be nice. But what does that plan include?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Everything. He will be the kind of man you always wanted him to be. Attentive. Trustworthy. Loyal. Obedient. He'll be better than a Boy Scout. Basically, we're going to turn him into zombie, but without all the growling and biting and missing body parts. He'll be a zombie with good hygiene.

**MRS. CLARKE:** And you can do all that... by shutting off parts of his brain?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** Yes, ma'am.

**MRS. CLARKE:** That's... that's... wonderful! How soon can we get started?

**DOCTOR CRANKHOFF:** I've got an opening on Wednesday at noon. You can be out on the town that evening. Shall we get started on the paperwork?

**MRS. CLARKE:** Oh, yes! Let's! This is so exciting!

*Drop the lights and main drape.*

## ACT ONE, SCENE 7

### ZOMBIE NEWS ALERT UPDATE #3

**ANNOUNCER:** *(Offstage voice. After a beat.)* And now, once again, Emily Fischer with a WIDK Channel 15 Apocalypse Tracker News Update.

*EMILY has once again entered Down Center through the curtains. Bring up lights on her.*

**EMILY:** *(Speaking into her microphone.)* Good evening. This is Emily Fischer reporting from the WIDK Channel 15 News Center with a live Zombie Apocalypse update...

*ROD and COLIN, as only zombies can, suddenly come through the curtains and grab EMILY. With a short scream, they pull her back through the curtains, then all is quiet.*

**ANNOUNCER:** *(Offstage voice. After a beat.)* We now return you to your regularly scheduled broadcast.

**ACT ONE, SCENE 8**  
**INTERVIEW WITH A ZOMBIE**

*In the darkness, two chairs are placed Center Stage on the Apron. After a beat bring up the lights on the Apron. If desired, a sign with "20/200" written on it can be flown in in front of the main drape. After a beat DAVID will enter Left and wave to the audience as he crosses toward Center.*

**DAVID:** *(Still standing.)* Hello, I'm David McNeal, and this is "20/200." Tonight, in a rare interview, and a television first, we bring you, live, an interview with a zombie. Please welcome to our show Mr. Xavier Young, the zombie.

*XAVIER, looking like anything but a zombie, enters Right, waves to the audience, and, smiling, crosses to DAVID. The two shake hands and then are seated. Throughout the interview, XAVIER will be unflappable and incredibly upbeat, and DAVID will try his very best to remain professional.*

**XAVIER:** Hi, David. How are you? That was quite an introduction. I like the sound of that: Xavier Young, the Zombie—XYZ.

**DAVID:** Welcome to our show, Xavier.

**XAVIER:** It's sure great to be here tonight. Say, David, you know why the zombie crossed the road?

**DAVID:** No. I can't say that I do.

**XAVIER:** To get to your show!

**DAVID:** (*Looking over XAVIER; doubtful.*) Well, it's certainly good to see that you've kept a sense of humour through all of this. So, tell me, Xavier, how did you become a zombie? Where were you bitten?

**XAVIER:** Actually, David, I wasn't actually bitten at all. I got to feeling really bad one day, and I just kept getting worse. Achy head, fever, sore throat, coughing and sneezing. I finally went to bed, and when I woke back up, I was a zombie. But you know, David, since then, I feel great.

**DAVID:** Well, that's certainly good to hear. So, tell me, Xavier, now that you're a zombie, do you have an uncontrollable urge to bite people?

**XAVIER:** Nope. I'd say no more than usual.

**DAVID:** Do you routinely attack others in a homicidal rage?

**XAVIER:** Nope.

**DAVID:** And I see you're not missing any body parts.

**XAVIER:** Original equipment!

**DAVID:** And you were checked out by a doctor?

**XAVIER:** Absolutely!

**DAVID:** Were you prescribed any medications, such as Nozombia?

**XAVIER:** Oh, no. No need.

**DAVID:** What about DNA replacement therapy?

**XAVIER:** I'm not even sure what that is.

**DAVID:** Well... um... that sure is fortunate for you.

**XAVIER:** I'll say.

**DAVID:** So, then, this doctor that you saw... he ...or she... confirmed that you were a zombie?

**XAVIER:** That's right, David. (*Taking a folded paper out of his breast pocket.*) I'm zombie-certified.

**DAVID:** Well, Xavier, that's... that's certainly remarkable.

**XAVIER:** It's certainly been quite the experience, David.

**DAVID:** So... um... tell me, Mr. Young, what is it that zombies do all day long?

**XAVIER:** Well, David, I can't speak for other zombies...

**DAVID:** No, of course not.

**XAVIER:** But I work at an accountancy firm. Nine to five. I'm a certified public accountant.

**DAVID:** An accountant?

**XAVIER:** That's right, David.

**DAVID:** And... um... has being a zombie hindered you in how well you do your job?

**XAVIER:** Not in the least, David.

**DAVID:** I would've thought that returning to work wasn't something that zombies routinely did.

**XAVIER:** Zombie or not, there's still bills that have to be paid.

**DAVID:** Yes. I suppose there are. So, tell me, Mr. Young, is your employer aware of your... *condition*?

**XAVIER:** Well, if not, I suppose he is now. (*Waving at the camera.*) Hello, Mr. Edgers! (*Beat.*) Actually, David, I'm quite fortunate to work for such an understanding firm. They encourage us to have hobbies. What we do in our spare time is our own business.

**DAVID:** Even being a zombie?

*XAVIER happily nods.*

**DAVID:** Well... um... (*Looking at his bio-sheet.*) It says here that you're married.

**XAVIER:** For the last seventeen years. Mostly happy. (*Waving at the camera.*) Hi, honey. Just kidding.

**DAVID:** And your wife... what does she think of your being a zombie?

**XAVIER:** Hard to tell, David.

**DAVID:** Hard to tell?

**XAVIER:** You know, David, I suspect at times that she might be a zombie, too. (*Beat.*) Just kidding, honey. To tell the truth...

**DAVID:** That would be refreshing.

**XAVIER:** She works all day, too. By the time the evening rolls around, we pretty much just sit in front of the TV and have a little supper.

**DAVID:** Supper? What do you have for have for supper? Brains?

**XAVIER:** Oh, no, David. We usually just warm something up in the microwave.

**DAVID:** But no brains...

**XAVIER:** Nope.

**DAVID:** I thought all zombies ate brains.

**XAVIER:** Well, David, once again, I can't speak for other zombies.

**DAVID:** Of course not.

**XAVIER:** Don't get me wrong, I've tried brains. I mean, who hasn't, right? Cow brains. Sheep. Pork. But I finally had to admit, I just don't like them. Besides, they're really high in cholesterol. Got to watch the waistline, you know.

**DAVID:** Um... Yes. So, Mr. Young, do you have any children?

**XAVIER:** We have two. (*Waving at the camera.*) Hi, Patty! Hi, Max!

**DAVID:** And what do they think of your being a zombie?

**XAVIER:** Hard to tell, David. I haven't talked to them in years. They're teenagers, you know.

**DAVID:** I'm sorry, Mr. Young, but nothing you've told me so far indicates that you're a zombie in the least.

**XAVIER:** Oh, I disagree.

**DAVID:** Just because you work a mindless job and spend your evenings in front of the television does *not* make you a zombie.

**XAVIER:** Oh, I wouldn't say my job is mindless, David. Some of those tax forms can be quite taxing. Get it? Taxing? That's a little accountancy humour.

**DAVID:** That just furthers my point, Mr. Young. Zombies generally lack a sense of humour, even a bad one.

**XAVIER:** And I find television to be quite stimulating. Zombie shows. That's all I watch. I can't get enough of 'em.

**DAVID:** Then you realize you're acting nothing like a zombie.

**XAVIER:** Of course not, David. That's just TV. It's not real.

**DAVID:** Look, Mr. Young... I'm sorry... but I just can't believe that you're a zombie, and I would be remiss to our viewers to pretend that you are.

**XAVIER:** What about when I got sick and turned into a zombie?

**DAVID:** What you described was probably nothing more than a nasty head cold. Maybe a touch of the flu.

**XAVIER:** (*Taking back out his certificate.*) What about this?

**DAVID:** Your *certificate*? May I?

*XAVIER hands DAVID the paper, which DAVID unfolds and quickly glances over.*

**DAVID:** (*Reading.*) "To whom it may concern: Mr. Xavier Young..."

*XAVIER points at himself, smiling.*

**DAVID:** "...may very well be a zombie." And it's signed, "MJ." Who is "MJ"?

**XAVIER:** He was the guy at the clinic.

**DAVID:** A "guy at the clinic"? This isn't even written on official letterhead.

**XAVIER:** What difference does it make who signed the form? I got sick and died and I became a zombie.

**DAVID:** Listen, Mr. Young. I'm not sure how you were cleared to come on this show, but obviously there has been a mistake.

**XAVIER:** You know, David, frankly, I'm a bit disappointed with you. I expected more from a professional journalist like yourself than blindly accepting prejudiced and outdated stereotypes.

**DAVID:** Normally, Mr. Young, I might agree with you. But I simply refuse to believe that you are a zombie. So far you've offered no credible proof to make me believe otherwise.

**XAVIER:** OK, then, how about this?

*XAVIER leaps from his chair and grabs DAVID, and as DAVID calls out in alarm, the two of them will disappear through the center opening in the main drapes. After a few growls from XAVIER and a few screams from DAVID and some brief but frantic shaking of the curtains from both of them—all out of sight, XAVIER will re-enter, a bit bloody. He will set the chairs back up, if necessary.*

**XAVIER:** *(Smiling while licking his fingers and sitting down in DAVID'S chair.)* We're going to take a short break, but we'll be right back with "20/200" after a brief message from Nozombia.

*Drop the lights on the apron. XAVIER will grab both chairs and exit through the main drape.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 9**  
**NOZOMBIA COMMERCIAL**

*Bring up a sharp spot on LINDSEY HAWTHORNE as she enters on the Left Apron.*

**LINDSEY:** Hi, My name is Lindsey Hawthorne. Best selling author. Radio personality. And zombie.

**OFFSTAGE VOICE(S):** *(Terrified shouting, from one or more people.)*  
Zombie! Zombie!

**LINDSEY:** When I was first diagnosed with zombie-ism, I was devastated. Until a friend of mine told me about Nozombia.

*Her FRIEND enters through the curtains to a sharp spot Center Stage.*

**FRIEND:** Being a zombie is just a medical condition. It shouldn't control your life. And now, it doesn't need to. Now, there is hope for people suffering from mild to moderately severe zombie-ism.

**LINDSEY:** People like me. Nozombia is the inhibitor-free medication made specifically for people like me... and you. People who refuse to let zombie-ism control their lives.

*During the following lines, LINDSEY will take a hand with part of the arm still attached (or the body part of your choice) out of her purse and start chewing on it, getting blood all over herself in the process. Every time FRIEND pauses, LINDSEY will over-exaggerate what she's doing. You have seen a drug commercial... right?*

**FRIEND:** *(Speaking quickly.)* Nozombia, taken daily, can significantly reduce zombie-like symptoms. Nozombia, *Zombium Cerebellex*, is not a cure for zombie-ism, but significant improvement has been seen in individuals with mild to moderately severe zombie-ism. No side effects from Nozombia can be worse than what you already have. Nozombia is not recommended for people who are already dead. Nozombia will not regenerate lost limbs or other missing body parts. Nozombia does not reduce one's ability to spread the disease. Nozombia is not a substitute for vaccination in individuals who are not currently vaccinated using Z-1 or Z-2 inhibitors. Notify

your doctor before discontinuing Nozombia. Symptom reversal can be sudden and severe. Before taking Nozombia, consult with your physician to see if being normal is right for you.

**LINDSEY:** *(By this time thoroughly splattered with blood.)* Nozombia—  
—So that you can be you again.

*Along with their spots, LINDSEY and FRIEND exit from whence they came, leaving the stage in darkness.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 10**  
**ANOTHER DAY, STILL NO ZOMBIES**

*After a beat, the curtain opens on a self-contained, fully-stocked fallout shelter. It has everything you'd need to survive the Zombie Apocalypse, or any apocalypse, as far as that goes. There is the noise of the bolts being thrown back in the vault door, which is Right Center, and then it slowly opens to the inside. HOWARD leads in VAL, who is blindfolded, but still enjoying the suspense.*

**HOWARD:** *(Once they're completely inside.)* OK, Val, you can take off your blindfold.

*VAL takes off her blindfold, and tries to take in the room. She is shocked, to say the least.*

**HOWARD:** Happy Anniversary!

**VAL:** Howard? Where are we?

**HOWARD:** We're in our basement.

**VAL:** This isn't our basement.

**HOWARD:** *(Pointing back outside.)* Yes it is. See out there. That's our rec room.

**VAL:** What is this place? How come I never knew it was here?

**HOWARD:** Because I wanted it to be a surprise.

**VAL:** A surprise?

**HOWARD:** I know you're surprised! I can tell.

**VAL:** But...

**HOWARD:** See? From the outside you can't tell this room's here at all. And once that door is locked, this whole room is one big soundproof vault.

**VAL:** How is this possible? How did you get it here?

**HOWARD:** Well, remember when we built the house? I just had 'em dig out this part here while they were at it. I had the walls, floor, and ceiling all poured while they did the rest of the foundation. Of course, these walls and the ceiling are thicker and reinforced, but with the cement truck here anyway, it really didn't cost that much more. I've been finishing up everything else ever since.

**VAL:** You've been working on this for eight years?

**HOWARD:** Yup!

**VAL:** You were working on *anything* for eight years?

**HOWARD:** I know! Who would've thought? I probably could've finished it faster, but I wanted to stay in budget.

**VAL:** Budget?! When have you ever kept to a budget?!

**HOWARD:** *(Not losing his enthusiasm, and not noticing VAL'S lack thereof; while moving about the room.)* We got enough food to last us fifty years. And water. And back there's the chemical toilet. We can charge the batteries and run the ventilation with this bicycle, and stay in shape while we're at it. And over here, I got all my guns over here, under the bunk, and videos and puzzles and stuff like that, so we'll have something to do if we ever get bored.

**VAL:** Why did you do this?

**HOWARD:** I did it for you, sweetheart.

**VAL:** Why did you do it at all?

**HOWARD:** Don't you like it?

**VAL:** Why is it here?

**HOWARD:** Zombies.

**VAL:** What?!

**HOWARD:** I built all of this so you and me can survive the Zombie Apocalypse. See... I've even got negative airflow, in case the virus is airborne. Them zombies can't get us in here, and neither can their germs.

**VAL:** There are no such things as zombies, you... you fool.

**HOWARD:** Well, I grant you... not yet. But we'll see who's the fool when we're safe in here and the zombies are all out there.

**VAL:** Listen, Howard. There are no zombies. There never have been zombies. And there never will be zombies!

**HOWARD:** You don't know that.

**VAL:** It's made up! It's science fiction, and not even very good science fiction. Zombies are no more real than... than vampires.

**HOWARD:** They couldn't get in here, either.

**VAL:** I don't care!

**HOWARD:** (*A bit hurt.*) You would if they were trying to bite you in the neck.

**VAL:** You're an idiot.

**HOWARD:** That's not a very nice thing to say.

**VAL:** Nice?!

**HOWARD:** Quite frankly, it hurts my feelings.

**VAL:** Don't wait for an apology you... you... nimrod. (*Beat.*) How much money did you waste on all this?

**HOWARD:** I wouldn't say it was wasted...

**VAL:** How much?!

**HOWARD:** (*Regaining his enthusiasm, as only a nimrod can.*) Well, like I said, the foundation didn't cost that much. Of course, that doesn't take in the door. That's no ordinary vault door. Look at it. Isn't it a beaut'?

**VAL:** No!

**HOWARD:** (*As if VAL had said nothing.*) I had to order the door all the way in from St. Louis. They delivered it on a flatbed truck while you were visiting your sister. And look. It's got a special feature. If you push the handle on the outside *down* when you lock it, then you can open it from the inside, just by lifting this handle here. But if you lift the handle *up* on the outside when you're locking it, then it can't be opened from the inside. It's usually the other way around, where you can always open it from the inside. But I switched it. So that way we can use this room for a jail, or something like that, if we ever need to. Pretty cool, huh?

**VAL:** Cool? No! It's not cool! None of this is cool!

**HOWARD:** (*Hurt.*) I thought you'd like it.

**VAL:** Are you out of your mind?! (*Beat.*) How much did all this stuff cost us?

**HOWARD:** We got free shipping on the door. Good thing, too. That baby's heavy.

**VAL:** I don't care! What? Everything! How much did it cost?

**HOWARD:** Well, all told, probably no more than two hundred thousand dollars.

**VAL:** Two hundred thousand dollars?!

**HOWARD:** Two-twenty, tops.

**VAL:** You spent two hundred and twenty thousand dollars on this?!

**HOWARD:** Probably closer to two-ten.

**VAL:** Like it matters!

**HOWARD:** You're always the one wanting to save money.

**VAL:** Because I'm the one earning it! (*Beat.*) Where did you get that kind of money?

**HOWARD:** (*Once more enthused.*) Really, it's not really that much, especially when you spread it out. I mean, that price includes my guns, but I would've bought them anyway. And all that food? I figure we got to eat whether we're in here or not. And think about how much we'll save on utilities after the Zombie Apocalypse. It practically pays for itself.

**VAL:** You spent two hundred and twenty thousand dollars...

**HOWARD:** Call it two-fifteen...

**VAL:** You spent all that money on this stupid room?

**HOWARD:** Honey... I did it for you.

**VAL:** You spent over two hundred thousand dollars... on this?! While I had to work an extra job to make ends meet? While I had to buy all my clothes at Goodwill?

**HOWARD:** They got some nice clothes there.

**VAL:** I put off having children because I thought we couldn't afford them.

**HOWARD:** Well, it's probably just as well. You wouldn't want to raise children in the Zombie Apocalypse, would you?

**VAL:** There is no Zombie Apocalypse! There never will be!

**HOWARD:** But...

**VAL:** Don't you dare! (*Beat; tearful.*) Don't you understand?

**HOWARD:** Well, there is a statistical possibility...

**VAL:** No. That's not it at all. (*Fighting back tears.*) I put off having children. I wanted children. I wanted children more than anything. I wanted to hold my own babies. I wanted to watch them grow up. I wanted to have grandchildren. And now... now we never will, because... because of this!

**HOWARD:** But...

**VAL:** How could you?

**HOWARD:** But...

**VAL:** We never go out. We've never had a vacation. We never had anything nice. I haven't had a new dress since we were married.

**HOWARD:** I thought you borrowed your wedding dress from your sister.

**VAL:** I could've been warm in the winter. We could've had air conditioning in the summer.

**HOWARD:** With the shelter mostly underground, it stays pretty much the same temperature year round. Now there's a nice thing.

**VAL:** A nice thing!

**HOWARD:** I was just trying to see the positive. Maybe you should, too.

**VAL:** I hate you!

**HOWARD:** That's not very positive.

**VAL:** I really hate you!

**HOWARD:** You don't mean that... do you?

**VAL:** Yes! Yes, I do! I hate you. I really hate you!

**HOWARD:** I thought you'd be thankful.

**VAL:** Thankful?! You know what, Howard, I am thankful. I'm thankful that I finally can see what an idiot you really are.

**HOWARD:** But...

**VAL:** Just be quiet! For once! Just... Just be quiet. Oh, I always suspected you were an idiot, but now there's no doubt. I'm thankful that now I can see how I've wasted my life being married to you. And you know what I'm *really* thankful for? Do you Howard? Do you?!

**HOWARD:** Um...

**VAL:** I'm thankful that I don't have to do it any longer. I'm thankful that I can just walk out of that door, and walk out of your life.

*And she does, closing the door behind her with a "click." HOWARD will cross to the door and try opening it, but it won't open.*

**HOWARD:** *(Beat; calling through the door, the soundproof door.)* Darlin'? Sweetie pie? Honey? I know it's soundproof in here, but if you can hear me, I think you pulled the handle the wrong way. Sweetheart? You accidentally locked me in. If you would, darlin', just push the handle down. I can do the rest. Sweetheart? Darling? *(Beat, sitting down on the floor.)* Well... OK, then. I'll just sit here and wait. *(Looking at his watch.)* Yeah. I'll just stay right here and wait. *(Beat.)* When the zombies finally come, you'll know where to find me.

*Drop the lights and curtain.*

**ACT ONE, SCENE 11  
PRE-INTERMISSION**

*After a beat, MCGUFFIN enters, along with his spot, on the Apron through the Center Drapes.*

**MCGUFFIN:** *(After a pause.)* Hello once again. As you may recall, I'm Professor Atwood McGuffin, your host for tonight's production of *1001 Zombie Nights*. As you can see, Ladies and Gentlemen, the zombie has come to represent the angst created by the schizophrenia inherent in the psyche of modern society. On one hand, we dread the imminent apocalypse, be it from zombies or any of the other agents of mass destruction that may befall us all. On the other hand, however, we welcome it as the only guaranteed agent of true change. Therefore...

*ROD and COLIN have entered Left.*

**ROD and COLIN:** *(As zombies.)* Get on with it! Get on with it!

**MCGUFFIN:** Zombies! They're worse than teaching freshmen. *(Beat; to ROD and COLIN.)* And, yes, this will be on the exam!

**ROD and COLIN:** *(Even more insistent.)* Get on with it!

**MCGUFFIN:** Very well. Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to retire to the lobby for a short intermission... perhaps a bite or two... after which we shall continue with *1001 Zombie Nights*.

*Drop the lights on the stage, during which MCGUFFIN, ROD, and COLIN will exit, then bring up the house lights.*

*INTERMISSION*

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**By Michael Soetaert**

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