

Dead Man's Lunch by Jesse Sensibar

Scene: Truck wreck on the side of a highway. Semi-darkened stage. Semi-truck lying on its side. The undercarriage is facing audience. At Stage left are Mikey, tow truck driver in high visibility safety vest seated with lunch pail. (Lighted) And Officer Will Ellis, highway patrolman standing with flashlight. (Lighted) A full body bag (unlighted) is next to them on the stage. Flashing yellow strobes off of stage left. Flashing red and blue strobes off of stage right. Sounds of slow moving traffic.

Officer Will Ellis

Thanks for getting the road open so fast Mike. Always glad when you show up, 'specially when I've got a mess like this. Any time I have something this bad I always ask dispatch to call you guys.

Mikey

You're just lucky that this whole damn trailer didn't bust wide open when I started sliding' that fuckin' thing across the pavement loaded like that; you know them things aren't built for that anymore. We'd been out here for fuckin' hours pickin up all that dog food. Hours. Fuck. You'd a had to call D-O-T to bring a damn snowplow out here to open this fuckin' road up. I'd had every wino in town out here shovelin' dog food for days. But I got this fucker in the safety lane now. It'll' be alright? There ain't much more I can do about uprighting this big bastard until my second truck gets here unless you wanna shut down the whole fuckin' highway for me.

Officer Ellis

No, let's not do that. We can wait. It'll be fine. As long as I can have one lane open for now we're OK. Traffics not too heavy yet. D-O-T already has the Arrowboard truck out.

Mikey

Hell, open both of 'em up for now if you want, let'er rip. They're sendin' Allen down with that other truck. And you know how long that's gonna' fuckin' take. Turtle motherfucker. Hope he's brung hiself enough Pepsi.

Officer Ellis

And cigarettes, don't forget about Allen and the cigarettes.

Mikey

Oh yeah, have to have something to do with his other hand while he's out here standin' around on my wreck watchin' me work. He might as well just stand there on the shoulder of the road an' jerk off. Then you could arrest him for me; put him in your backseat so at least he'd be outta my fuckin' way.

Officer Ellis

Not Allen. He'd be smoking and spilling soda back there. I'd get all kinds of grief from my Sergeant; and Becky can't stand the smell of cigarettes right now; she's got morning sickness bad.

Mikey

Not if you cuff him up he wouldn't. Yeah, cuff him up nice an' tight.

Officer Ellis

You wouldn't want me to do that to Allen.

Mikey

Shit. You jest try me. (beat) No. (beat) No I wouldn't. Allen's a good guy, just slow; so fuckin' slow. And he just don't have a monkey ass clue what to do on a wreck like this. He's been driving a wrecker since '86. You'd never know it by how he acts out here. God Damn.

Officer Ellis

What's that?

Mikey

Looks like lunch I'm hoping.

Officer Ellis

Lunch?

Mikey

Yup, surnuff. Let's see... sandwich...4 cookies...apple...oh goody my favorite, cling peaches in heavy syrup. Hot damn, this must be my lucky day.

Officer Ellis

You brought lunch out here at 5 AM? It's not even light out yet.

Mikey

Nope. He did.

Officer Ellis

Who did?

Mikey

HE did.

Officer Ellis

Mike Harris; you mean to tell me you're eating a dead man's lunch?

Mikey

Well yeah, but I'll share. No reason to get all butthurt about it. Hell, I'll even let you have the cookies if you want, jest don't get near my damn peaches.

Officer Ellis

Mikey, that's not the point.

Mikey

I know. You got a can opener? Otherwise I'm gonna hafta climb back into that damn thing and find his.

Officer Ellis

Mikey, for Christ sake, you can not eat a dead man's lunch.

Mikey

Why the hell not?

Officer Ellis

Well, because you can't. It's just not right. I mean, here he is, lying right there beside us, the life crushed out of him, in that body bag, and you're just gonna' sit there beside him and eat his lunch?

Mikey

Well, yeah. Can't do nothing else 'till Allen the Turtle gets here. Got all my chain laid out 'an ready to go. Now alls' I need is his truck to hook on the other end.

Officer Ellis

But, but...

Mikey

You sure you don't want some of this sandwich? Looks like meatloaf. With catsup and mustard, bet it's homemade. All cut in half nice from corner to corner. Hell, that's just like my momma used to do. Somebody made this here lunch with love. You don't want all that love and care to go to fuckin' waste now do you?

Officer Ellis

I think I'm gonna be sick.

Mikey

Why?

Officer Ellis

Meatloaf. Catsup. You didn't have to help put him in the bag.

Mikey

Sorry 'bout that officer, guess I'll just have to have this whole sandwich for myself. How 'bout them fuckin' cookies? I got to eat all them too? Or are you gonna' be able to pick your feathers up out the mud and help me? Shit, maybe Allen 'ill want some cookies. Maybe turtles like cookies. I know they eat dead people, I seen it in the movies.

Officer Ellis

Shut up.

Mikey

What, you don't think I'm funny today?

Officer Ellis

No, I think you're a god damn vulture today.

Mikey

Me! A "vulture"? "Today!" Shit, what about "Every Day" You're goddamn fuckin' right I'm a vulture, course I'm a vulture. Matter a fact I'm a big ol' fuckin' Turkey Buzzard with a red nasty long neck an beady eyes, just floatin' around over the highway, waitin' for twisted steel an death so's I can come on down an make a livin.' Like the man said, "fuckin' buzzard gotta' eat, same as the worms", or sumpin' like that. What the fuck you think a wrecker driver is? I ain't like you. State pays you to come on out here an help people. Fuckin' Serve and Protect and all that good guy shit. But me, fuck, I'm out here makin' a livin off everyone else's misery an misfortune, or did that thought never cross yer fuckin' mind?

Officer Eillis

hummm...

Mikey

Goddamn right, huh? (beat) What's his fuckin' name?

Officer Eillis

Who?

Mikey

Who the fuck you think? Who we been talkin' 'bout? My goddamn lunch date here, that's who.

Officer Eillis

Johnston, Bruce. Bruce Johnston. But you're not supposed to know that. We haven't notified the next of kin yet.

Mikey

That's Johnston with a T?

Officer Eillis

Yes.

Mikey

No Shit! Hey this wreck is out of Payson ain't it? I thought that's what it said on the door of this piece of shit.

Officer Ellis

Yes; B&H Trucking out of Payson; that's who it's registered to.

Mikey

You got an address on the Johnston guy? (beat) Maybe (beat) Rural Route 3 Box some-fuckin-thing or other I forgot?

Officer Ellis

How the hell did you know that?

Mikey

His mommy wrote it inside his fuckin' lunchbox.

Officer Ellis

Really?

Mikey

Fuck no!

Officer Ellis

Well then how...

Mikey

He's my brother-in-law.

Officer Ellis

(beat) Aw bullshit Mikey...

Mikey

No really; he is.

Officer Ellis

(beat) For real Mike?

Mikey

Well; yeah; I mean, I ain't seen him an' I sure as fuck don't care to now; but I think that's my ex-wife's ex-brother-in-law you got zipped up in this here bag; which pretty much makes him my brother-in-law, don't it?

Officer Eillis

Well, I guess, in a roundabout kind of way. If you're not just blowing smoke up my britches. Which I'm not sure about yet, but I plan to find out.

Mikey

Well you know Payson, things kinda roundabout down there. No, I'm dead fuckin' serious. Matter a fact his little sister went to high school with me. Give me my first blowjob; to completion I might add; not that it took very long. And that damn sure makes us kin in Payson.

Officer Eillis

Sweet god all mighty Mikey, what am I gonna do with you???

Mikey

See, that makes it alright that I'm eatin' his lunch; us bein' kin an' all.

Officer Eillis

No; it does not make it alright! I can't wait to see the look on Becky's face when I tell her about today. She's going to think I made all this up.

Mikey

Hey now; hold on a fuckin' minute. You ain't tellin' your wife none of this. She took real good care of me at the ER last time I cut my finger off. Real good care; best nurse I ever had up there. Gave me all kinds of Morphine. They had this finger back on 'for I even knowed it, didn't feel a fuckin' thing. She thinks I'm a nice guy. She even said so. You know how many people think I'm a nice guy? Not very fuckin' many I'll tell you that. So don't you go ruin'n it for me Ok? Jesus, I thought we was friends.

Officer Eillis

We are friends.

Mikey

Then you'll keep your mouth shut.

Officer Eillis

Yes.

Mikey

You fuckin' promise?

Officer Eillis

Just don't ever eat my lunch.