

GROSS: See that Gilbert?

GILBERT: You'm under arrest.

GROSS: Whass up?

GILBERT: Breakin' an' enterin', causin' Mrs May to faint, killin' a domestic cat, an' impersonatin' a dead body.

GROSS: I'm Archie Gross!

GILBERT: Thass another one.

GROSS: What?

GILBERT: Impersonatin' Archie Gross.

GROSS: I am Archie Gross!

GILBERT: You're not Archie Gross. Archie Gross dun't land 'isself in the shit like 'iss. Archie Gross is a schemin', clever man. Archie Gross lead where others follow. Archie Gross is a respected member of the community. Buster. You id'n no Archie Gross. You'm an alien. Where's your passport?

*He releases himself from the handcuffs and connects GROSS to the other two.*

GROSS: Look at my face! Look! Underneath the mud! There's Archie Gross! Damme your sister's married to my son!

GILBERT: C'mon. In the toilet. I got business to conduct.

*He leads them out. GROSS limps.*

GROSS (as he goes): Any witch-hazel in the toilet Stanly?

STANLY: No.

GROSS: Got a bad toe.

*They are out. MAY starts to come round. GILBERT returns with the BODY and the toilet key. He places the BODY on the sofa and climbs out through the window. MAY wakes up and stands. She walks to the BODY and peers into its face.*

MAY: Still 'ere are 'e? I got a damn good idea now whass goin' on and if you think you can get one up on me Archie Gross tis a damn sight 'arder'n you think!

*She twists the BODY's ear. No response. Pinches its arm. No response. Checks its toe. White, bloodless, not swollen. She screams again and yells for STANLY. There's a muffled shout from the toilet. She shouts for STANLY again and a Pan*

*Am bag appears at the window. At last she is struck dumb. GILBERT follows the bag through the window. He dumps it on the settee and shows her its contents.*

Whass this?

GILBERT: Pan Am bag. Under arrest.

MAY: Uh?

GILBERT: Where's your passport?

*MAY produces her passport as if by magic from her apron pocket.*

MAY: 'Ere.

*GILBERT, thrown by the fact that someone's actually got a passport, feels he ought to check it, so he does.*

'Tis all stamped an' up to date.

GILBERT pockets it.

GILBERT: Hm.

MAY: Whass the money for? Good works?

GILBERT: The body.

MAY: You wanna buy it?

GILBERT: Thass my orders.

MAY: Hell.

GILBERT: So. You'm under arrest.

MAY: What for?

GILBERT: Er, harbourin' a divine body, thass an offence for a start. You gotta turn over aliens for quarantine.

MAY: That body id'n divine. 'Tis dead.

GILBERT: 'E quoted the scriptures at ya! I 'eard'n.

MAY: That was Archie Gross!

GILBERT: Archie Gross is locked in the toilet Missus, 'long wi' Stanly an' Alice.

MAY: What 'e arrested Stanly for?

GILBERT: Possession of a gas mask.

MAY: What about this money thun?

GILBERT: I'll 'ave that.

*He takes the money and handcuffs MAY to the body.*

Wait 'ere.

*He goes out to the toilet. MAY kneels before the BODY and makes absolutely sure it's dead. The FARMERS of the*

*parish enter silently through the window and stand in a line behind the settee with their hands behind their backs. They study MAY examining the BODY. GILBERT returns with the other three. MAY looks up.*

MAY: This body is dead y'know Stanly.

STANLY: Course 'tis bloody dead. 'Tis stinkin' the place out! Why the 'ell d'you think I bin wearin' a gas mask for three days!

*GILBERT releases MAY from the BODY and handcuffs her to STANLY. The FARMERS speak to the audience. While they speak GILBERT goes behind them and handcuffs them all together, and finally to MRS MAY.*

FARMERS:

We, the farmers of this parish,

Have noticed

Nothing much

Amiss.

Little to take our minds

Off the ripening wheat

Has come to pass.

We were warned of chaos,

Warned, we ignored it,

Completely.

United we stood

As here we stand

Before you.

Depleted

But wholesome.

Shorn,

But uncontaminated.

Worn down

But self-contained.

Pious, smug,

Opinionated,

Generally healthy.

*They are all handcuffed. GILBERT hustles everyone out. As he goes he jabs a finger at the BODY.*

GILBERT (to the BODY): You stay 'ere.

*They go out. The lights close up on the BODY and the dead cat on the floor. The BODY slowly moves. It leans forward. Takes the cat up and places it on its lap, strokes it, looks at the audience and speaks.*

BODY: I'd like to tell y'all a story. But before I begin, we have to go back, to the beginning...

*The lights fade to blackout.*

## Part Two

*Early morning. A bright summer's day. A dead MARINE lies centre stage. WALT stands guard by the fence. Larks sing. A jet takes off and flies overhead. Larks sing. The dead MARINE sits up and tells a story to the audience.*

BODY: When I was alive, towards the end of my life – by the way I'm dead right now, I died, close on five minutes ago – I had a fear of yawning. Got to figuring if I yawned too hard the skin round my lips, when they opened wide, would peel right back over my head and down my neck and turn me inside out. I started to yawn when I was sixteen, back home, when I was bored. I know that healthy guys when they hit sixteen start to do things other than yawn. But believe me where I came from there was little hope of that. And yawning was the next best thing. One day my paw caught me yawning. He said, 'Son, join the marines.' (Here, as the BODY talks, WALT starts humming to himself, 'The Star Spangled Banner'.) I said, 'Paw I'm bored'. He said, 'The marines will sure kick the shit outa that.' So. I enlisted. First thing they do is cut my hair off. Which kinda makes me uneasy cus by now I'd reached neurosis point about this skin peeling business, and I figured the only thing which would stop the skin from shooting right back over the top of my skull when I yawned was the hair. Figured it might like hold it in check long enough for me to yank it all back into place. But on my first day... had my head shaved... believe me I kept my mouth tight shut. But, by the end of my training at boot camp on Parris Island I was a highly-tuned killing machine, prepared to be sent to any part of the world, get shot up and die protecting the free world from the onslaught of Communism. Paw was right. Sure kicked the shit outa yawning. I was ready to kill. Go over the top. I had a weapon in my hand and my finger itched to squeeze the trigger. Got to figure if it itched much more it'd drop off. I had visions of me, under fire, storming a tree line in a fire fight and comin' up face to face with a big Soviet stormtrooper and there I am weapon in hand ready to blast the bastard to boot hill finger on the trigger and the damn thing's itchin' so much it drops off. We were issued with ointment anyhow to