

Shiners

An Original Teleplay By

Garret Tufte

© 2006 Garret Tufte
Lawrence, Kansas
gtuftel3@gmail.com
785-231-9903

FADE IN:

EXT. STUMPY'S BAR - NIGHT

Two BURLY MEN toss a drunkard out of the side door onto the nearby street curb.

BURLY MEN

...and don't ever come back this time, jerk-off!

MARTY stumbles for a few steps and falls on his back in the middle of the street. He is wearing a green canvas jacket, dark blue jeans, and cheap Velcro shoes. He opens his eyes and sees the stars.

MARTY

Uhh... the stars are... beautiful... I wish... I could just feel the... chariot races... umm umm... stars... the first time... Stumpy's bar... umm... sausage... grill... ugh.

ELIAS, wearing the same clothes, save a brown leather jacket, stamps out a cigarette inches from Marty's face.

ELIAS

Come on, let's get you home.

The pair walks through abandoned alleys on their way home. Buildings block the moon; streetlights shine but always off in the distance. A car sits in an alley next to a dumpster. The car is covered in rust, missing all of its rims, and has four flat tires. It is obviously not useful as a transport, but it works well as the home of two brothers, Marty and Elias. They are each six feet tall, 180 pounds with short blonde hair and blue eyes. They look like identical twins.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Marty and Elias wake to the sound of a beeping garbage truck. Elias lays in the passenger seat, Marty in the back.

MARTY

Oh god, I feel awful. What happened last night?

ELIAS

It's probably better you don't remember.

MARTY

Just tell me how many I drank, so I don't drink so much again.

ELIAS

You had five shots and eight beers, by my count, and, if you wanna know what else happened last night, just look at your shirt.

Marty looks down to see a white undershirt covered in the greasiest, nastiest stains imaginable: ketchup, mustard, chocolate, various shades of yellow.

MARTY

Yeah, what's new?

ELIAS

That giant vomit stain going from your neck to your stomach. You chugged a pint of warm beer to impress the waitress and you threw up, amazingly, on you both.

MARTY

Hmph, didn't notice that one...

ELIAS

I don't suppose you noticed that black eye, either.

Marty looks into the rear view mirror from his seat in back. A bruise covers his left eye.

MARTY

"Well I'll be damned. I suppose that fucking bartender gave me this... he's gonna be eating boot."

He leaves the car, intent on returning to the bar, trips on his own feet and falls on his face. Elias, now leaning on the car, simply stares.

MARTY

(muffled by the concrete)
How long have we been here, Elias?

ELIAS

Getting on three years.

Marty lifts himself off the concrete. He sits on an empty Folger's Crystals can.

MARTY

And how long since Mom and Dad died?

ELIAS

Four.

MARTY

Four years is too long. We gotta do something, we gotta do something with our lives. We're not gonna live forever.

ELIAS

We are doing something... grudgingly working whenever we can, having fun. I know I'm happy. I think it's all working for us.

Marty stands to confront Elias aggressively.

MARTY

How is it working for us? We got no money, we got no real jobs... it feels like we're just running on a treadmill. A never-ending treadmill.

ELIAS

It's not like we're running very hard or anything..

MARTY

Real funny, jackass. I'm trying to make an important point about us, what we're doing. We live in a god damn car! ...Last night, I had a revelation...

ELIAS

(Interjecting)

While you were piss drunk?

MARTY

Yes, while I was *drunk*, dammit...

ELIAS

You know, you were babbling about chariot races. Are you talking about that?"

MARTY

Yes and-or no-I...shut up for one goddamn second! I'm talking about us succeeding, achieving greatness, wealth, and all that. All the shit we've been doing is a waste of time and getting us nowhere. Telling people where to park at the race track, temporary garbage men, volunteer work, forget all that. We're running on a treadmill... so all we have to do is get off."

Elias whips his head around, looking at Marty.

ELIAS

You mean kill ourselves?!

MARTY

No, no, I mean get off this mode of operation and find on a new one.

ELIAS

Great idea. Okay, how do we do that?

MARTY

You remember that time we beat the shit out of a guy because some other dude gave us twenty bucks?

ELIAS

Yeah, I remember. I didn't feel too good about doing that.

MARTY

Well, like I said, us and everyone else is running on these treadmills right? Some of them make more money to run, some less. All we have to do is get off our treadmill and swipe the gym bags of the people who are still running.

ELIAS

Real nice revelation *Martin*. Steal from people. You know that's how our parents got killed. You're gonna feel like a real hero when you blow away some kid's mommy and daddy for a fucking quarter!

MARTY
No, but listen-

ELIAS
No! Don't ever talk about this again, we are *not* criminals! I'm the oldest, when it comes down to it, I make the decisions around here.

MARTY
Older by two fucking minutes...

ELIAS
You got that?

MARTY
Oh yes sir...

Elias puts his arm around Marty's shoulder.

ELIAS
Hey... we're brothers. Now let's get some food and for the love of god, get your shirt washed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The brothers walk up to an alleyway door carrying a shoebox and a black trash bag. Elias knocks on the door.

VOICE
The sign says to come in the front door.

Elias knocks again. MR. WALSH answers. He is rotund, jolly, wears a black mustache, and is dressed in a white apron, baker's cap, and powdered sugar.

MR. WALSH
Look, I thought I told - hey, it's the wonder brothers! To what do I owe this pleasant surprise?"

ELIAS
Hi Mr. Walsh. We could really use some food and, if possible, your sink.

MR. WALSH

Hey, anything for my two favorite holiday workers. You guys saved my ass last year, and you worked for half minimum wage- on Christmas! You can have anything that's been laying around for a few days.

ELIAS

And the sink?

MR. WALSH

Of course! ...just, ahh, try not to let the customers see you.

ELIAS

No problem, we'll just be in and out.

MR. WALSH

Is that, uhh, laundry?

ELIAS

Yeah, so?

MR. WALSH

Well I suppose- yeah, it's fine. The things I do for you kids...

The brothers load up on as many cinnamon rolls, long johns, and purple cream custards as they can fit in the box, and they eat a few on the spot for good measure. They move to the sink in the back and start working on the laundry. They scrub with dish cleaning liquid and industrial strength degreaser. Finished, they pick up their things and head for the door.

MR. WALSH

Hey Marty, before you go out and do whatever it is you do, why don't you go down to the free clinic on 42nd street and have that black eye checked out. They're good people down there."

MARTY

You got it, Mr. Walsh.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Back at the car, the brothers string up their laundry between a light pole and a fence post.

MARTY

Hey, do you really think we should go down to the free clinic? I mean, what can they do about a black eye?

ELIAS

Well there have been many technological advancements in the field of medicine lately, perhaps they have a miracle cure for this unfortunately common affliction.

MARTY

You're a moron, you know that?

ELIAS

You know we *really* have nothing to do today; plus I heard Carl works down there. We could go see him.

MARTY

When you're right, you're right. We could bring him some donuts too, and maybe he could get us a job down there. We could be the guys who magically heal black eyes.

ELIAS

As soon as I'm done with these clothes, we'll both get magically healed - by the head nurse.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Elias and Marty enter the subway station casually at first, then jump the turnstiles and run toward the train. An elderly male SUBWAY EMPLOYEE runs after them but quickly stops.

SUBWAY EMPLOYEE

Hey you damn kids! Get back here or I'll... ugh... have to...

(MORE)

SUBWAY EMPLOYEE (cont'd)
do nothing and swallow my pride
when you damn kids with your young
legs get to run off ahead of any
repercussions... I need a drink...

CUT TO:

EXT. FREE CLINIC - DAY

The free clinic always looks nice, save for the gang of unseemlies crowding the front door asking for change. On this particular day, business is booming, so to speak. A disheveled HOMELESS MAN approaches Marty.

HOMELESS MAN
(jitteringly)
Hey man, hey man, my car ran out a'
gas and I been stuck here for two
weeks, can ya spare just five bucks
or somethin'?

MARTY
Shit, I ain't got no money! You
probly got more money than me and I
work for a living! Get a job ya'
lazy bastard!

The words do not affect the man at all; he turns away and goes straight for the next person walking on the sidewalk.

ELIAS
Does that make you feel like a
bigger man, Marty? Does bitching
him out make you feel better about
yourself?

MARTY
Yes... yes it does.

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CLINIC LOBBY - DAY

The inside of the clinic is cleaner than the outside; it actually looks better than most privately funded hospitals. Marty walks up to the RECEPTIONIST. Elias busies himself with a magazine, Esquire.

RECEPTIONIST
Can I help you sir?

She is young, pretty, and looks great in a hospital gown. Marty leans on the desk toward her.

MARTY

You can help me, miss. I am in desperate need of a woman's touch, particularly yours.

RECEPTIONIST

(dryly)

Sir, what is your problem?

MARTY

It's this black eye I got here ma'am. I got it yesterday when I fought a pack of wolves with my bare hands, defending two children when they fell into a pen at the zoo.

RECEPTIONIST

Wolves did that? They usually bite or claw-

MARTY

Actually, the black eye's from the kid's father who I had to beat into submission when he wouldn't save his own children. What kind of a world do we live in when parents don't live up to the responsibilities of having kids? I, for one, would never-

RECEPTIONIST

Look sir-

MARTY

Marty, please...

RECEPTIONIST

Fine, *Marty*, what do you think we're supposed to do about a black eye? Send you into the operating room?

MARTY

Well, not necessarily. I was just hoping-

RECEPTIONIST

You were just hoping for a handout.
Put some ice on it, take this
morphine and go. Please.

MARTY

Umm... is this really morphine?

RECEPTIONIST

Sure. Whatever. Just get out of
here.

Marty walks over to Elias on one of the benches.

MARTY

Prissy bitch... I think she likes
me though. She gave me this.

Marty shows Elias the pillbox. It reads "Tylenol" in big
letters.

ELIAS

Real nice. Say, do you have to hit
on every girl we see? Your act's
about as fresh as a Foghat concert.
Did you ask her about Carl?

MARTY

Nope, you'd better do it.

ELIAS

Fine.

Elias walks over to the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

Hey, I thought I told you to get
lost.

ELIAS

Oh, that was my brother. We look
alike.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, this is the lamest come on
I've ever-

Elias points to his left eye.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh, no black eye... oh I'm so sorry
I just thought your brother...
excuse me... how can I help you?

ELIAS

My friend Carl works here, I think.
Know where he is?

RECEPTIONIST

Carl Perkins? He's down that
hallway and to the left.

ELIAS

Appreciate it. By the way, I'm
sorry about my brother; he really
should learn to show some respect.

Elias walks back to Marty, flashes one last smile at the
receptionist, and gets one back. Marty is shuffling through
a Sears catalogue.

MARTY

So, where's Carl?

ELIAS

Right down the hall, apparently.
And bring the donuts.

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CLINIC HALLWAY - DAY

CARL is right where the receptionist said. Tall with black
hair, he is rarely seen without his headphones. Broom and
dust bucket in hand, he is sweeping the floor.

MARTY

Hey Carl... Carl!

Carl takes off his headphones with a surprised look on his
face.

CARL

Marty and Elias! Nice to see ya,
but what are you doin' here?

ELIAS

We didn't have much to do today, so
we figured we'd come down and bring
you this here bag.

Carl looks in the bag and squeals with amusement.

CARL

Donuts, oh baby! I haven't eaten
all day!

Carl pulls out a cherry cruller and bites down with full force. His look of delight quickly turns to disgust.

CARL

Oh god, this is terrible!

He puts the cruller back in the bag, throws it down, squashes it with his foot and sweeps it into his dust bucket.

CARL

That thing had to be a month old, where'd you get it from?

ELIAS

That bakery a couple blocks away, those bastards must've sold us an old one! You can bet they're gonna get an angry letter from me!

CARL

Well anyway, how you guys been doin'? I haven't seen ya since we snuck into that *Raising Caine* concert.

ELIAS

All in the spirit of civil disobedience, of course.

CARL

Yeah, sure... hey, I got some bomb ass dope back at my place next time you guys wanna smoke, and I'll sell ya some for cheap too, if ya like.

MARTY

Yeah, definitely sometime, but listen, are there any more jobs around here?"

CARL

Nah, they're done hiring regular jobs for the summer. But if you're interested in something a little more... lucrative, go talk to Mr. Carmichael on the fifth floor, he's the administrator.

ELIAS

Yeah, excellent, we'll do that. Nice seein' ya too, and sorry about the donuts.

Elias and Marty walk toward the elevator.

CARL

And make sure you tell him Carl
sent ya!

CUT TO:

INT. FREE CLINIC 5TH FLOOR - DAY

Marty and Elias stand outside a door on the fifth floor. The name reads: Administrator GARY CARMICHAEL.

ELIAS

What do you think he meant by
'lucrative'?

MARTY

I guess we'll find out. I hope
you're not scared.

Marty knocks on the door.

MR. CARMICHAEL

I said I didn't want to be
disturbed!

MARTY

Carl told us to come and talk to
you about work!

The brothers wait a few seconds in silence. *Click* The door opens slowly, revealing a burly beast of a man, sitting at a desk, holding a remote control. He is dressed in a suit, sans jacket, and has graying hair and a mustache.

MR. CARMICHAEL

So, Carl told you to come talk to
me about work. I don't suppose he
explained exactly what the job
would entail. Did he?

Mr. Carmichael stands up and moves closer to the boys. He stands two feet from them with his hands in his pockets.

ELIAS

He didn't-

MR. CARMICHAEL

How could he? He doesn't even know!
Ha ha ha!

The brothers look at each other and shrug.

MR. CARMICHAEL

Well, let's get down to it then. I have a particular job that must be done immediately, and unfortunately, my regular... subcontractor is out of town right now. I'm not going to go into specifics until you agree to do it.

He holds up a picture of a man.

MR. CARMICHAEL

I need this guy dead, tonight.

The brothers do not say a word; they just stare.

MR. CARMICHAEL

Well?

MARTY

What do we get for doin' it?

MR. CARMICHAEL

You get the standard contract kill rewards package: an apartment, 5,000 dollars, and the most important thing of all, a steady job working for me.

The brothers look at each other, then at Mr. Carmichael. A long silence follows. Marty takes one last look at Elias.

MARTY

Yes, we'll do it.

MR. CARMICHAEL

Great, do it by any means available to you. On the back of the photo is his name, his whereabouts, and the time he'll be there.

He hands Marty the photo.

MR. CARMICHAEL

When I read in the paper tomorrow that he was found murdered in cold blood, I'll have you to thank. Come back one month from now, not any sooner. And don't try to contact me.

(MORE)

MR. CARMICHAEL (cont'd)
And don't come near this part of town. And if you tell anybody about this, you're both dead. You got that?

MARTY
We got it, sir.

MR. CARMICHAEL
Okay, we're done here, so get the fuck out.

Mr. Carmichael grabs his remote and starts the door closing.

ELIAS
But how'd you know we needed an apart-

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

The brothers get back to their car. They get into the front seats and close all the windows, Marty on the driver's side and Elias on the passenger.

MARTY
I know what you're gonna say-

ELIAS
WHAT THE FUCK! What the fuck did you just do?! Do you realize you just accepted an offer to kill a man in cold blood?! Do you have any IDEA what you just did? What the FUCK is going on in that mind of yours?! Stealing from people is bad enough, but killing a real, live person? Do you even know what that is?

MARTY
Do you?

ELIAS
No, but I know it's bad. I know it's real, real bad. This is the sort of shit that fucks people up for life. All those movies we've seen, all those movies about how war is hell and about how killing a man is the worst thing that you can do. What about God?

(MORE)

ELIAS (cont'd)
Do you think he's gonna look down
and smile on you as you waste some
poor kid's dad?

MARTY
He probably has it comin', and
since when did you believe in God?

ELIAS
Since, well... never, but that
doesn't make it right!

MARTY
It doesn't make it wrong either.

ELIAS
What the hell is that supposed to
mean?

MARTY
It means I'm gonna do this whether
you want to or not! And just try
to remember this conversation when
we're sittin' back in the luxury of
our new apartment, sippin'
martinis, and enjoying the sweet
life. Remember, we *need* this.
I've had enough and I ain't lettin'
another opportunity pass by.

ELIAS
We do need the money, but how do
you even plan on killing this guy?

MARTY
Remember that time I got mugged
comin' back from that audition?

ELIAS
Course, you were bleedin' all over
the place, looked like you'd fought
a pack of wolves.

MARTY
Truth is, I wasn't *actually* mugged.
The guy tried his best but I got
the better of him. And I took a
souvenir.

Marty pulls up a piece of the floor carpeting and extracts a
.38 snubnose revolver.

MARTY
One round fired...

Elias looks with wonder. Marty holds the gun like it is an old girlfriend, lovingly but with the utmost confidence.

ELIAS

So... you... fired it?

MARTY

Yup, right into the bastard's gut. Shot him dead and ran off with the gun before I even knew what happened.

Marty hands the gun to Elias.

MARTY

Here, hold it.

Elias cradles the gun in awe.

ELIAS

So, you're gonna shoot him with this? Are you sure he'll die?

MARTY

It's got five bullets; I'm sure that'll be enough kill him, even if I don't use 'em all.

Elias gives the gun back to Marty, who wraps it in a washcloth and sticks it in his coat pocket.

ELIAS

So when are you gonna leave?

MARTY

Soon as possible, just gotta find a ski mask. You comin'?

ELIAS

Well, you know I got nothin' else to do...

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

The brothers enter the subway station just as they did before, skipping over the turnstiles en route to a train. The subway employee, shocked, spills his beer in the commotion.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

The brothers sit along a tree line across the street from an upper-west side apartment building. Marty gives Elias a knowing nod.

The streets are empty. There are few cars, and almost no pedestrians. As the brothers approach the door, they each slip on their black gloves and ski masks. Marty holds up the picture.

MARTY

This is the guy, no one else.

Elias gives an approving nod. The brothers situate themselves to the sides of the front door. Marty takes the gun out of his pocket and holds it at the ready in his hand. He checks up and down the street and knocks on the door.

Creee-eek Marty steps out in front of the door and, with one kick, busts the door down. The force hurls a man, MR. FRATELLI, to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

The brothers quickly enter. Elias grabs what is left of the door and jams it back in the frame, unsuccessfully. Mr. Fratelli attempts to get up, but is met with Marty pointing a gun at his face.

MARTY

Get down on the goddamn ground,
now! You've lived five seconds too
long already Mr...

Marty looks at the back of the picture.

MARTY

Mr. Fratelli, I know what you've
done. I've come to cover this floor
with your filth and send you
straight to fuckin' hell! Any last
words before I *pull the trigger*?

Mr. Fratelli is almost incoherent with terror. He attempts to get a few words out.

MR. FRATELLI

Mm-m-my fuh, fuh, fa-family...

Marty looks up from the man and pans to the left to see a woman, his wife, holding a seven year-old girl, his daughter. Marty stars in horror at the terrified family. Slowly, his gun slips from his hand and falls harmlessly to the wood-paneled floor.

Mr. Fratelli, still terrified, curls into a ball and cries. Marty falls to his knees and wails.

MARTY

I didn't do it! I didn't kill him,
ooohhh!

The daughter starts to run to her father. Elias picks up the gun. The mother stops the daughter. Mechanically, Elias aims the gun toward Mr. Fratelli. He holds it there for a few seconds, and it begins to shake. He tilts the gun up and releases the revolving chambers. He empties five bullets into his hand. He closes the gun, putting the bullets and the gun into his pockets. The mother and daughter run to Mr. Fratelli, hugging him.

ELIAS

Marty, we gotta get the fuck outta
here, now!

Marty rolls around on the ground sobbing. Elias grabs him by the cuff of his shirt and slaps him in the face.

ELIAS

Marty!! We must leave immediately!

MARTY

I didn't kill him! Don't you
understand?! I didn't do it!

Elias gets down on his haunches and speaks straight to Marty's face.

ELIAS

I don't care! You just tried to
kill somebody and if we don't leave
right now, we're gonna be in jail
for the rest of our lives! You
wanna make your life better,
goddammit? Run for it!

Marty gets onto his feet, still dazed. Elias grabs him by the coat. They hastily make their retreat out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The brothers run across the poorly-lit street to the treeline across from the apartment.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

The brothers sprint through a wooded area.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER BEACH - NIGHT

Elias and Marty reach a beach on a large river. A highway bridge spans a quarter mile nearby, but hidden by the large trees. Elias pulls out the bullets and the gun. He gives them to Marty. Marty examines the objects for a few seconds, then throws them in the river.

The brothers take all of their clothes off, save their boxer shorts.

Elias yelled as he grabbed Marty. The two ran out the front door, across the street and into the nearest wooded area. They took everything off but a pair of shorts and lit it all on fire. Later they throw the gun into the river. In the distance, sirens wailed.

Two hours later, Marty finally regained his composure enough to realize what had just happened. Someone had died, and he was walking down an empty street with his brother at night wearing only a pair of swimming trunks. Recent events faded from his memory and he found himself staring at the stars again.

"You comin' Marty?" Elias asked with the slightest grin on his face.

"Yeah," Marty said, "I'm comin'."