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ASK ALTF "CHARACTER'S NAME TO ASSIGN ALT+F?" *
MERGEFORMAT "THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR"

Written by

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EXT. A NARROW COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

It is an early spring morning; the weather is cold and damp. A large white van stops on a country road.

Frankie
(Voice Over)

Getting into the movie business would have been great but I was really starting to enjoy this job.

The sound of the driver trying to start the engine can be heard. He tries three times, he fails three times.

Frankie
(off camera)

Ah shite!

Mickey
(off camera)

Try it again.

Frankie
(off camera)

I've already tried it three times! Right, we're walking the rest of the way.

Rickey
(off camera)

I'm not going anywhere dressed like this.

Frankie
(off camera)

The cottage is only over the hill. You can either come with me and get paid for the day or stay here and get nothing. It's your choice lads.

A tall skinny man with blonde hair gets out. His name is FRANKIE MALLAGHAN and he is in his early 30s. FRANKIE is wearing white trainers, green khakis, a white T-shirt, a green body warmer and a black baseball hat. He goes to the back of the van and opens the doors. From the van he takes a large video camera, a tripod and a shotgun mic on a boom pole. As he is doing this the other two men can be heard getting out of the van. Bending his back, FRANKIE sets the equipment down on the ground. When he straightens up his two employees are standing in front of him off camera. He

tries his hardest not to snigger.

Frankie

Really lads, it's not that bad.

The camera reveals two short chubby shivering men dressed in gladiator costumes, about two size too small, with cheap fake swords. Their names are MICKEY and RICKY. They glare at FRANKIE. FRANKIE chuckles.

Ricky

You're lucky this sword ain't sharp or I'd stick it in your head.

Frankie

Quickly now, Mickey, get the camera. Rickey, get the mic. Let's go lads.

FRANKIE starts running over the hill as MICKEY AND RICKY get the equipment.

Mickey

(calling after Frankie)

Should you not move the van off the road?

Frankie

(shouting back at him as he runs)

There's no time! Come on!

RICKY and MICKEY look at each other, sigh, and then run after FRANKIE trying not to drop the equipment.

EXT. A NARROW COUNTRY ROAD

A group of people are gathered outside a small cottage. The males wear gladiator costumes. The females wear togas. A golden chariot headed by two white horses is on the road. Among the crowd are TONY and MOLLY MAGUIRE. TONY looks at his watch.

Tony

This was a bad idea. We're supposed to be at the chapel in twenty minutes.

Molly

Just be patient. Remember, this is what your father wanted. Anyway, sure the kids are having a grand time.

MOLLY looks over at the boys having a fake sword fight and chuckles.

Tony

A good time? It's a funeral. And I don't get why you are taking this whole charade so well.

Molly

Sure didn't your father say himself, if you can't have a laugh you might as well be dead. Ironic, that he had a heart attack whilst telling a knock, knock joke. I never did find out what Anita's surname was..

Suddenly MOLLY begins to cry, TONY quickly comforts her.

Tony

It was Di....

MOLLY glances up at TONY, still sobbing. Tony pats her on the shoulder whilst consoling her.

Tony

Never mind, Mum, never mind.

While holding his mother in his arms, TONY looks up the street to see FRANKIE and his employees running down the road. Tony lets hold of his mother and ushers five men into the house.

Tony

About bloody time, right lads, lets get going. The Funeral Director has arrived.. finally.

TONY follows the men into the house. Indistinct murmuring and movement can be heard. Moments later they emerge carrying the coffin just as FRANKIE reaches the cottage.

Frankie

(out of breath)

Whoa! Not yet! Bring that back inside.

FRANKIE shoves his way past a group of people including Molly, and ushers the lads with the coffin back inside.

Tony

What do you think you're playing at?!

Frankie

You can't leave. We've got to record all this.

Tony

You should have gotten here on time then!

RICKY and MICKEY arrive at the cottage both out of breath.

Frankie

Tony mate. I'm doing this for your father. He told me to capture every moment, the drama, the excitement, the sorrow. He wanted to go out like Tony Curtis, or Russell Crowe, he said. He wanted a funeral to a remember.

Tony

Anything else?

Frankie

Well, something about the cost not being an issue, but we can discuss that later.

Tony raises his eyebrows, Frankie continues.

Frankie

It's for your father, Tony, for your father, and Your mum, wee video to watch when theres nowt on the telly.

Tony

Fine, but we better be in that chapel ASAP.

Frankie

Nice one. Get your Camera Mickey!

Frankie puts his arm around Tony as they walk into the house. Mickey, with the camera on his shoulder, follows

them. Rickey follows with the mic.

EXT. THE CHAPEL - MORNING

Around 20 Protestors are gathering outside the chapel grounds. Many have signs bearing messages such as 'Exploitation', 'Fuck off to Hollywood' and 'Oscar? No Chance!' There are 10 police officers controlling the area. The protestors are on the right hand side. On the left hand side is a steep muddy hill; at the bottom of the muddy hill is St. Morgan's River. A female reporter is among the crowd interviewing a protestor. She is accompanied by a camera operator.

Reporter

Sir, What would you like to say to Frankie Mallaghan?

Man

I have lived in this town for 50 year and I have never witnessed anything as disturbing as this. Frankie Mallaghan you are taking advantage of the dead, you are making a laughing stock of this village. You belong in a prison! Ya prick!

EXT. A NARROW COUNTRY STREET - MORNING

MICKEY and RICKEY are filming mourners outside the cottage. FRANKIE is directing them, MICKEY is on the camera, and RICKY is operating the microphone. The coffin sits on the trolley just outside the garden gate. Some family members wait by the coffin.

Frankie

Right, zoom in on his old sister Doris and for god's sake do it before she lights another cigarette and ruins the continuity.

Mickey

Can't you just ask her politely not to smoke for a few minutes?

Frankie

That's like asking Al Pacino not to shout.

Tony emerges from the cottage and interrupts Frankie.

Tony

Your in luck Frankie. It's gonna be another while before we can leave after all, I can't get Paddy on his phone. We have different Da's Frankie and unfortunately he takes after his when it comes to the ol' timekeeping. You see, my mum got a little lonely, you know, while my Da was away fighting the Nazis. Da forgave her though, he loved her, and when it came down to it, choose his pride or choose love, he chose love. Ahh, he could be a gobshite at times, but in many ways he an honorable man....

Frankie

(Interrupting)

You not gonna go off on one of those long winded speeches about how great your Da was, are you Tony?

Tony

Yeah.

Frankie

(excited)

Mickey get that camera on Tony! Ricky get your mic ready! Everyone could you be quiet please?!

MICKEY places the camera in front of TONY and lines up the shot, RICKY holds the boom mic in TONY's direction trying to keep it as steady as he can. Everyone else stops talking and watches proceedings.

Frankie

Camera ready?

MICKEY gives the thumbs up.

Frankie

Sound ready?

RICKY nods.

Frankie

Action! Go Tony. I promise to leave you alone after this.

Tony

(Sighs)

Fine. My Da was a great, honorable, brave man. He was the first man in the village to join the army and fight in the war. He was given a medal for killing fifteen Germans in one day all by himself. He ran at the Olympics, he boxed at the Commonwealth games. He was a great man full of charity, he always had time for the elderly. He was the pride of this village, this old place will never be the same again now that he's gone. I will never ever forget what he said to me seconds after he had the heart attack...

Frankie

(to Mickey)

Zoom in Mickey, this is the moment

MICKEY zooms in on TONY who is trying to hold back the tears.

Tony

...he said... Tony... ... my son, that hurt like a bastard. He was a great man, but not so much with the words.

No one says a thing, it is silent, the old chain smoking aunt cough's and splutters. RICKY is still holding the boom mic above his head with his one arm, sweat is running down his forehead.

Frankie

(awkwardly)

Cut, that was... that was....thanks for that Tony.

TONY is seemingly proud of his speech. He goes outside the garden gate and talks to a few mourners. RICKY and MICKEY

stop recording.

Mickey

Paddy's Da was in the army as well.

Frankie

No he was not, sure Paddy's Da only gets out of bed for his daily pint.

Mickey

But he told me he was all over Europe during the war.

Frankie

I know he was, he was dodging a call-up.

As FRANKIE finishes PADDY comes running down the road.

Tony

Paddy, where the hell have you been?!

Paddy

(out of breath)

Sorry Tony. I had to run down from the hill. Some bastard has left a big white van in the middle of the road.

FRANKIE slowly disappears into the crowd of mourners.

CUT TO:

EXT. A NARROW COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Around 15 minutes have passed. It has started raining and the funeral procession has now moved onto the road. Mickey and Ricky are recording the footage.

Frankie

(in Mickey's ear)

Cut, Bloody Hell, what is she doing with that?

Molly is holding an umbrella over her head to stay dry.

Mickey

Frankie, for god sake, she's 98 years old. She's just trying to stay dry.

Frankie

I know that! But the Romans didn't have umbrellas. Have you not seen Gladiator?

Mickey

No, I don't like Russell Crowe. I read somewhere that he's a complete bastard. Sure didn't he make a rude phone call to a hotel or something?

Frankie

No, he destroyed a phone in a hotel. I think. Just go and take the umbrella of her.

Mickey

No, do it yourself.

Frankie

This video isn't for me Eric, it's a dying mans request. I don't want it to look amateurish.

Mickey

Why not? It's not like he can complain about it. Unless your next venture, feckin séances.

Frankie

You want paid for this gig?

Mickey

Fine, but if anyone asks I'm telling them that you told me to do it. I'm not getting a boot in the bollocks, not for the shite rate you are paying me.

MICKEY goes over to MOLLY to get the umbrella as FRANKIE looks on. MOLLY refuses to give it up and the two tussle with the umbrella. Suddenly MOLLY lets go of the umbrella and MICKEY slips and lands on his backside. Molly grabs the umbrella and starts hitting Mickey across the head with it.

Molly

Ya wee thieving bastard!

Frankie

(to everyone)

I told him not to bother.

EXT. THE CHAPEL - MORNING

The police are struggling to keep the increasing amount of protestors under control. The reporter has found a supporter of Frankie among the crowd who is completely drunk. The reporter holds the microphone out at full stretch in order to distance herself from the smell.

Reporter

Sir, perhaps you could tell the people watching what you think of Frankie Mallaghan?

Drunk

A great fella, I've known Frankie since he was a little lad. I've lived in this village for 55 year. My old mum, god bless her, gave birth to me in a pub just down the road there.

Reporter

(having to repeat herself)

And what do you think of his funeral videoing business?

Drunk

He's a great fella, I've known him since he was a little lad. I've lived here all my life...

Reporter

(interrupting)

That's fine sir.

The reporter slowly backs away from the drunk who staggers after her.

Drunk

You wouldn't have a few quid would you love? Just for a wee cup of tea.

EXT. A NARROW COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

The procession is now making its way along the road. Six men carry the coffin. They stop to switch with six other

mourners. The chapel is just over the hill. FRANKIE wants MICKEY to record a close up of MOLLY crying and RICKY is holding the shotgun mic right in her face.

Frankie

Cut! What are you playing at Ricky? That mic is way too close to her face. It's showing up in the shot! Tony, Paddy, comfort your mother, it'll look great and it wouldn't hurt if you could shed a tear Tony. Or you Paddy.

Tony and Paddy each put an arm around their mother.

Paddy

I don't see why I need to cry, he wasn't my Da.

Frankie

Well, the audience won't know that.

Tony

Audience? What audience?

Frankie

Right, Molly, your husband's passed away and he is never ever coming back. Your son Tony lives in the city. Your cottage is falling apart, your dog ran away last week because it hates the smell of ya, and on top of all that you've got abig Burt Reynolds moustache. Roll the camera!

Molly does nothing, so Frankie carries on.

Frankie

What is your problem? All I want is a few tears.

TONY starts to move towards Frankie. Fists clenched.

Tony

Right, I've had it to my neck with this nonsense, if we are not at the chapel in five minutes I'm going to take that microphone and stick it right up your hole...

Frankie

And on we go lads, off to the chapel.

The horse drawn chariot moves off over the hill, the procession follows. FRANKIE turns to MICKEY and RICKY.

Frankie

Never mind lads, she'll cry later when I show her the bill.

MICKEY and RICKY shake their heads. As the procession walks down the hill and towards the chapel FRANKIE, MICKEY and RICKY spot the protestors up ahead.

Mickey

What are you going to do Frankie? We can't go down there. If that crowd gets a hold of you the next funeral will be yours.

Frankie

Every cloud has a silver lining boys. You can't buy this kinda publicity.

Ricky

I don't know Frankie, I think your wrong about this one. These protestors are getting angrier every funeral. We were lucky to get away unscathed last time.

Mickey

Ahh, that was a scary afternoon right enough. Who would have thought that a Wizard of Oz themed funeral would have upset so many people.

Frankie

I'm not sure what the big issue was...

Rickey

Well I'm no Sherlock Frankie, but it I think painting half the flipping road yellow might have been the tipping point.

As the procession nears the protestors, one of them spots FRANKIE and begins to yell at him, soon all the protestors have joined in.

Protestor # 4

You're no Spielberg!

Protestor # 5

Fuck off to Hollywood ya twat!

A police officer approaches FRANKIE. Chuckling, in a fine mood, despite the tensions.

Police Officer

Best keep to the left hand side of the road lad.
And mind your step, it's a little slippery.

FRANKIE nods his head and instructs everyone to do as the officer has instructed.

FRANKIE

Let's move to the left everyone, to the left!

Just as the procession is about to reach the gate a protestor comes out of nowhere and rugby tackles Frankie. FRANKIE stumbles into the lads carrying the coffin the coffin falls from their shoulders and lands on the muddy hill. The pouring rain has created a mud slide and the coffin starts sliding down the hill toward St. Morgan's River. There is complete silence as everyone watches the coffin pick up speed and make its way downhill, finally splashing into the river. FRANKIE lifts his head and dusts himself off as two police officers and Tony run down the hill trying to stay on their feet as they do so. MOLLY has finally started to cry. Frankie looks at MOLLY then looks at MICKEY, who isn't recording her. FRANKIE sighs.

EXT. CHAPEL - LATE AFTERNOON

A Close up of Frankie as the rain beats down on him.

Frankie

Getting into the movie business would have been great but I was really starting to enjoy this job. I was gonna take the business to Hollywood and do all the big star's funerals. Everyone would have known FRANKIE MALLAGHAN the funeral director. I would have been first on the list for all the big celebrity wakes. They would have loved me they would. Maybe I might have got my

name on one of them star things on Hollywood Boulevard. I might have even got an academy award for service to the industry. Not anymore though, it's all gone, all gone. Maybe for the best, I suppose it was a little controversial.

FRANKIE looks to the right.

Frankie

I've never noticed before but you two really are great listeners.

The camera pulls back to reveal the two big white horses beside FRANKIE. FRANKIE's cell phone rings, the sound is muffled (cheesy 80s music ringtone). He pulls it out of his pocket, wipes the mud off it, and answers.

Frankie

Hello... Hello.....

A muffled voice can be heard, speaking fast.

Frankie

Mrs. Butler? ahh, yes I remember he was ill. So he passed did he? Very sorry, very sorry indeed..No, no, we are still available. I think. What's that you say?

The muffled voices continues, slightly louder.

Frankie

No, that's no problem at all Mrs. Butler, I can arrange that. I'll sort the costume. Don't you worry. You can count on me to me to make the big day a tad more bearable. Chat soon. Bye, bye, b-bye.

Frankie ends the call, and dials Mickey's number. After a few rings, Mickey answers.

Frankie

Mickey, we got another booking. I know, I told you it was good publicity. Meet me in Rogan's and we will discuss the details over a pint. Bring your laptop, the camera, and bring Ricky. Oh, and one more thing..... Do you still have that Adolf

Hitler costume?....

THE END

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