

NAIL IN THE COFFIN

ACT ONE

INT. FUNERAL HOME - AFTERNOON

A crying and somber crowd of mourners listen to a eulogy for a man named Rick. STEPHANIE (40s), his sister, reminisces about his life.

In the very back of the funeral home sits Rick's half-cousin MAUREEN (50s), joined by her son BRENDAN (20). They feel little emotion for this man.

However, to Brendan's right sits his girlfriend RACHEL (20), who bawls hysterically. Brendan leans toward her.

BRENDAN

Are you okay?

RACHEL

(through tears)

Yeah... I'm fine.

Maureen leans over.

MAUREEN

Honey, if you need to step out or something feel free.

RACHEL

(still crying)

No, no I'm okay. I do this at every funeral.

BRENDAN

I wish you would've told me. You didn't have to come.

RACHEL

(gaining some composure)

Yes I did. I wanted to support you.

BRENDAN

I met Rick one time. It is shocking how much I am unbothered by this.

RACHEL

Well, I wanted to be here for your mom, too.

MAUREEN

Hon, he was my half-cousin and you're crying more than I did.

(MORE)

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

(beat)
Which isn't saying much because I
didn't cry at all.

Rachel wipes away tears as they continue to listen to
Stephanie's eulogy.

STEPHANIE

(shaky)
Rick was so full of life... and
wonder... and kindness.
(beat)
The last thing he would want is for
us all to be here mourning.

Rachel sobs loudly.

The funeral guests, including Stephanie, take notice and look
towards her sympathetically. The Miller family winces.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

But in a way, seeing all of you
here-
(choking up)
It proves to me how much of an
impact he made on so many lives.

Rachel sobs again as the Millers hide their faces. Stephanie
looks to her.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

(wiping tears)
Thank you.

Stephanie steps down from the podium. Brendan leans over to
Rachel.

BRENDAN

Ok let's get out of here.

RACHEL

(sobbing)
Thank you.

Through violent tears, Rachel starts packing up her purse.
Just then, Stephanie puts a hand on her shoulder.

STEPHANIE

Hi sweetheart.

RACHEL

(eyes wide)
Hello.

STEPHANIE

I know how hard this sort of thing
can be. Thank you so much for
wearing your heart on your sleeve.

RACHEL

(sobbing)
You're welcome.

Stephanie sympathetically bites her lower lip.

STEPHANIE

Why don't you go up and speak about
Rick? It really helps to vocalize
your feelings.

Rachel's eyes pop out of her skull. She looks to Brendan and
Maureen, who don't know what to say.

RACHEL

Oh, no no no, it's o-

STEPHANIE

(interrupting)
Please. It means a lot to hear
about what he meant to others.

Rachel swallows a baseball sized lump in her throat. The
Millers concernedly watch as Rachel weakly gets out of her
chair.

She walks to the front of the funeral home.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME - SAME

Rachel, horrified, situates herself behind the podium.
Through tear-filled eyes, she looks out into the somber sea
of black suits and dresses.

Behind her lays Rick's coffin, adorned with flowers, and a
LARGE MONITOR that cycles through a slide show of Rick with
his family and friends.

She clears her throat and looks to the back at Maureen and
Brendan, whose eyes may be wider than her own.

RACHEL

(as if reminiscing)
Rick. Rick. Rick... What to say
about Rick? Short for...

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 (unconfidently)
 Richard.

The audience does not react.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 He was a man... with hope in his
 eyes. And- happiness in his soul.

The audience nods and cries. Rachel gains some confidence as she continues.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 He was extremely devoted. So
 devoted. To everything.
 (pause)
 Especially in his work. He loved
 his job. So much. Day and night, he
 loved to provide for others... He
 spent long hours on his feet.

Right as she says this, a photo of Rick in a wheelchair pops up on the TV Screen.

The audience dawns confused looks, and Brendan and Maureen look horrified. Unsure of what she did wrong, Rachel looks to the screen and gasps.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 (trying to cover)
 Feet- feet- features! He spent long
 hours on his features to-- give
 great impressions.

The audience nods and seems to forget about her mistake. Rachel clears her throat and continues.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Uh... he was a family man. He loved
 his family... Stephanie-- his-
 (guessing)
 Sister?

Stephanie nods happily.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 And he loved his cousins, and...
 friends... But above all, above
 everyone else-
 (confident)
 He loved his wife.

The screen shows a photo of Rick kissing his HUSBAND. Noticing the strange looks of the audience, Rachel looks over to the screen in horror.

She looks back out and locks eyes with Rick's husband, who crosses his arms and furrows his eyebrows.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(choking up)
Uh- uhm... Uh-

Stephanie shouts a suggestion from the crowd.

STEPHANIE
Talk about his hobbies!

RACHEL
(stunned)
H- His hobbies?

She looks towards Brendan and Maureen, who try to mime "Trombone playing" to her. She struggles to understand.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Uh, he-- um... Um-- He loved making
balloon animals?

Maureen accentuates her actions. The funeral guests murmur to each other. Rachel keeps trying to guess, as if playing charades.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
He loved-- taffy making! He's a
taffy maker!

Maureen smacks her hand to her head. Rachel begins to cry.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
He was so kind-hearted! Wouldn't
hurt even- even hurt the smallest
fly.

A photo of Rick dressed in hunting attire, sitting behind a dead deer flashes on the screen. Rachel begins to cry even harder.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
Rick... was- Rick lived a good,
long life.

A photo of Rick that says "Rick: 1989-2019. Died too soon" flashes on screen.

Rachel lets out a guttural sob. The funeral audience murmurs much more loudly.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 He- he- he loved eating food. He
 loved pizza so much!

A photo of Rick giving a middle finger to a pizza pie flashes on the screen. Rachel shakes violently.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 (angry)
 Why the hell is that in this slide
 show?!

Rachel sobs uncontrollably, as do members of the crowd. Many disapprovingly shake their heads.

She looks to the back to see Maureen and Brendan covering their faces with their hands.

Rachel quiets down the very rowdy audience and tries to fix what she's done.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Ok! Ok, ok. Obviously, I- I didn't
 know Rick as well as many of you.

The audience quietly listens. She composes herself and continues.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 And I am so sorry for any false
 statements that I've made about his
 life... But, if there's one thing--
 one thing!-- that I know for sure
 about Rick-
 (beat)
 It's that he so badly wishes his
 life was not taken away so soon.

A logo for the "Suicide Awareness Campaign" flashes on the screen behind Rachel.

The room is silent. Absolutely silent. Rachel looks at the screen for a long moment before looking out into the crowd. Their faces speak louder than any words.

Brendan and Maureen are already gone.

Rachel steps away from the podium and silently leaves the room.

END