

Yan Bratovich

**DANCING  
‡ ON ‡  
COFFINS**



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**Dancing on Coffins. Black comedy**

«Издательские решения»

**Bratovich Y.**

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Harold Hoffman is a head of funeral home. Hoffman and his comical colleagues decide that it is necessary to increase the number of orders for coffins and a funeral. They want to increase death rate in the city. The journalist Julia Shweetner understands — this group of psychopaths threatens her city and fight against them.

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# Dancing on Coffins

## Black comedy

**Yan Bratovich**

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EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – CITY ROAD – DAY

An old black JEEP with a coffin strapped to the roof makes its way down the road, following a stream of cars.

EXT. BANK – DAY

Coming out of the bank, a fat rat runs out onto the road, the Jeep closing in on it, running it over.

INT. JEEP – DAY

Four people sit. At the wheel, HAROLD HOFFMAN (31), tall and thin dressed in a long black overcoat; head of funeral home “HON”. On his neck hangs a thick silver chain with a tiny silver coffin pendant.

On the passenger side sits HITCH (22), an albino with a bitter face, dressed in a black shirt and a black suit.

In the back we see HAZONE (36) and HUMPBACKED SILLY (38). HAZONE, a typical skin headed goon in a black polo neck and jacket holding a shovel, ready to dig a grave. HUMPBACKED SILLY, is literally a humpbacked man with a silly look on his face, disheveled hair, dressed in a black vest and old grey sweater.

HITCH

We squashed that rat!

HAROLD HOFFMAN

(One bank rat is more, one has is less. What’s the odd? These bank rats are bloodsuckers and they will be worse than us. Believe me.)

HOFFMAN lights a up a brown cigarette.

HITCH

(to Hoffman)

Harry, what are we carrying this woman in the coffin for?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

The client hasn’t paid. He came, threw his dead wife in the coffin, and took off.

Hitch laughs loudly and hysterically. HOFFMAN smiles.

HITCH

And now it's on our head?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Yes.

HITCH

So why are we dragging it around? We could have left it at the office!

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Because his time has run up, and I've used the last number he's called me from to track him down. We're going to his house to return her.

HITCH

(Laughing)

I can't wait to see the look on his face!

HAROLD HOFFMAN

(Oh yes. So... deathburger for everyone.

(Laughs)

Do not twitch and listen to me.)

HITCH

Can we stop for some smokes first?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Sure. There's a shop near the bus stop. I'll pull over.

EXT. BUS STOP – DAY

Hoffman brakes sharply near the stop and the coffin goes flying off the roof of the Jeep and rams into the people standing at the stop. As inertia would have it; the dead woman goes flying out of the coffin too, people start screaming frantically.

THE ELDERLY WOMAN

A mummy!

INT. THE BLACK JEEP – DAY

Hoffman and Hitch look to one another.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Looks like our dead lady has jumped out to touch someone. Hitch, get out and calm people down!

HITCH

Oh shit!

Hitch exits the car.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Hazone, Silly, get out and get that coffin back on the roof!

HAZONE

Yes Sir.

(looks to Silly)

Let's go!

EXT. BUS STOP – DAY

Hitch is helping people get up after the coffin has knocked them over.

HITCH

Forgive us, please, we are so sorry. The madam has been trying to escape her death it seems. We'll just collect her and be on our way. So sorry everyone.

THE ELDERLY WOMAN

You are not Christians! What the hell are you doing you gangsters! Do you have no conscience?

HAZONE and Silly push people out of the way, scoop up the dead woman and place her back in the coffin, and strap the coffin back onto the roof while Hitch keeps trying to keep people calm while taking out a black trinket in the form of a coffin out of his jacket pocket.

HITCH

Ladies and gentlemen, excuse us for the inconvenience. Here... take our business card.

(hands the old woman a business card)

We've got fresh cedar coffins at a great price.

THE ELDERLY WOMAN

(rips the business card)

Damn you and your Cedar Coffins!

Hitch turns around and looks on the Hazone and Silly.

HITCH

Let's get out of here before they tear us to pieces!

Hitch, Hazone and Silly get back in the car. Hoffman presses on the gas, and the car quickly darts off.

INT. THE BLACK JEEP – DAY

Hoffman gains speed. Hitch scratches his forehead nervously.

HITCH

Bad shit...

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Who made this poorly constructed coffin?

Silence. Hoffman turns around and looks at Silly.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Silly, was it you?

Humpbacked Silly nods. Hoffman turns away from see a sign on the road, and begins to laugh like a madman. Hitch follows.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Has correctly made, Sily. Though had a good time. And that they there stood, like a sleepy flies. But next time do not do. We create bad advertising to ourselves.

Hoffman laughs, gets from a pack a brown cigarette and lights.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

By the way, let talk about advertising. What about advertising?

HITCH

We have billboard and business cards. So there's something...

HAROLD HOFFMAN

But that's not present enough.

HITCH

No, it's not.

HOFFMAN tightens up and places a finger over his chin in deep thought.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

I wanted to talk to you guys for a while. All of you perfectly well know what our business. Our business is and our business is to bury people – to bury these boring and pityful people. But we don't have enough work at the present moment. Money too. I suggest you to make jerk. Make jerk together with me.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

All of you perfectly well know that recently people live longer and almost never die.

They go to fitness facilities, pools, get health treatments, get massages, and so on. They love life and revel in health and happiness that it enrages me! They live forever when they should by lying in our coffins, in our eternal tombs! Original advertising and many corpses are necessary to our survival as business!

HAZONE

Wow!

HITCH

(cheerfully)

Harry, are you serious?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

I'm very serious.

HITCH

But for advertising, especially creative advertising, we need money! We need to pay for ideas, videos, and displays. And what about dead bodies... Shit! How are you going to get bodies?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Right now we have enough to pay for basic local advertising. From there, we can think of our own advertising. It'll be so good that people will practically start jumping into coffins.

HITCH

And bodies? Where you will get them, Harry? You can't get those.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

I've thought that over too, and I need your help. By means of our imagination we will create bodies. We will raise the general death toll in the city!

HITCH

The general deaths toll Harry? And how do you propose we do that?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Well, many funeral homes are now closed. They've collapsed. This fucking healthy way of life has left them without work. That leaves us room to become the leading business in this industry.

(beat)

Well? Are you with me?

HITCH

Courageous idea. But whether it will turn out or not...

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Only the courageous take the main prize. Or do you want to stretch out your pathetic beggarly existence further? Huh? Trust me. Just trust me – and you will live in own houses, buy fresh meat, and not have to cut off pieces of corpses from hunger. And you'll have real women – the live and mobile kind.

HITCH

(nodding)

You are right. Well, I'm in.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

How about you Hazone?

HAZONE

I'm in. and Silly too.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Great.

Hitch quickens.

HITCH

When do we get started?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

As soon as we come up with the money today.

Suddenly, the boys hear knocking on the car roof.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

(hysterically)

Shit! This bitch on the roof is knocking! Hazone!

HAZONE

What?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

You fancy this lady in the coffin?

Hazone lewdly licks his lips.

HAZONE

Yes. Very much. She's as beautiful as plastic flowers.

Hoffman nervously finishes smoking his cigarette and throws the stub out the window.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Well, then let's go back to the office. To hell with her! Let Hazone have a good time with her. This home delivery isn't doing it for me. Our new stage in life begins now and we should waste our time on trifles.

Hoffman switches car gears and takes off abruptly.

EXT. "MALL OF AMERICA" – DAY

With a microphone in one hand stands a TV reporter JULIA SHWEETNER (25), a blue-eyed girl with curly dirty blonde hair, dressed in an expensive grey coat and a fashionable green scarf wrapped around her neck.

JULIA SHWEETNER

How do I look Bobby?

In front of her, BOBBY (27) the camera operator, an unshaven guy in a red jacket stands with the camera on and strap around his shoulder.

BOBBY

Smile. Exude happiness. Be positive.

Julia smiles.

JULIA SHWEETNER

I don't pretend to be happy Bobby, I *am* happy.

Julia smiles timidly and her eyes sparkle. She looks to her watch.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Okay, let's get this show on the road. Out the text up.

Bobby lifts a sheet of paper for her to read off of, and holds it near the camera.

JULIA SHWEETNER

The new MALL OF AMERICA will be opening tonight; and it will be noted as the architectural decision of the decade. The lights, and streaming water fixtures are very beautiful and unusual to the typically mundane environment of our city – this hi-tech shopping centre certainly brings a work of art to our landscape. All profits earned from the first couple of days within the mall's opening will go to charities for sick children.

Bobby gives her a thumbs-up.

JULIA SHWEETNER

As organizers speak, there will be no problems with parking at the opening, and many have been signed on to VIP-parking. Mall attractions include the "Big wheel" and a Falling Tower. An attraction called "The Web stealing a brain", amongst others. There will also be a 5D cinema and skating rink.

Julia lowers her microphone.

BOBBY

Looks good Julia!

Bobby lowers the camera.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Was it really?

BOBBY

Perfect.

Julia smiles.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Don't flatter me. I want honesty, I'm still new to this you know.

BOBBY

I told you – it's perfect. We needed to edit the opening though.

JULIA SHWEETNER

How long till the final product?

BOBBY

(looks to his watch)

About two hours.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Let's grab a coffee then.

BOBBY

Sounds good. I could use something hot myself.

Julia's cell phone rings. She flips it open and sees the name "Christian" and smiles. She answers the call.

JULIA SHWETNER

Yes, darling?

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY – OFFICE – DAY

CHRISTIAN (27) sits at a big black table – a strong, attractive type in a blue shirt and with a tie. He holds his cell in one hand, and types on his laptop with the other.

CHRISTIAN

Julia? Greetings darling.

(smiling)

I do disturbing you?

JULIA SHWEETNER (O.S)

No, I just finished my set.

CHRISTIAN

I've missed you, and your voice. Are you at work?

JULIA SHWEETNER (O.S)

We're reporting on the Mall of America now, and I have a class tonight that will probably go till late. I'm so sorry.

CHRISTIAN

Call me when you're done, I would love to pick you up. My beautiful lady shouldn't have to travel home alone at night.

Christian takes a swig of his juice sitting on the table.

JULIA SHWEETNER (O.S)

Oh, Christian, you're amazing. What would I do without you?

CHRISTIAN

You know, our anniversary of when we first met is coming up – January 14<sup>th</sup>. There's a great little Italian place I'd love to take you to; romantic music, good food.

JULIA SHWEETNER (O.S)

Oh, Christian! Of course I would love to go!

CHRISTIAN

Perfect. See you soon.

JULIA SHWEETNER (O.S)

Kisses.

CHRISTIAN

You too! Bye.

JULIA SHWEETNER (O.S)

Bye-bye.

EXT. MALL OF AMERICA – DAY

Julia hangs up and put her hair up.

BOBBY

Well, looks like he calls you everyday.

Julia looks to him with confusion.

JULIA SHWEETNER

It's love Bobby.

BOBBY

If I were the boss of an insurance company, you would fall in love with me?

JULIA SHWEETNER

(laughing)

Bobby, you'll always come first. You're my best friend. Now let's grab that coffee.

BOBBY

Ok.

Bobby collects their things and walks into the mall with Julia.

INT. MALL OF AMERICA – DAY

As they walk through the mall together...

JULIA SHWEETNER

These attractions are incredible, and so well planned out. Just about anybody can come here, couples, children. It's really made for everyone.

BOBBY

You and Christian would have a great time here! You could spend a whole day here from dusk to dawn.

JULIA SHWEETNER

And while that would be fun, we also don't need that many distractions. The main thing about him is that he's a good man and we can enjoy each other just about anywhere.

BOBBY

That's true...

Bobby and Julia reach the centre of the mall. Near a complex we see girls walking with the big bags. The girls photograph each and laugh.

Bobby and Julia show the security guards media passes go and inside.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – FUNERAL HOME “HON” – EVENING

The two-storied building of the funeral home sits beside a cemetery surrounded by old ugly trees.

INT. FUNERAL HOME “HON” – HAROLD'S HOFFMANS ROOM – EVENING

Harold Hoffman approaches an open window and lights up. Hitch sits at the management table. Opposite of Hitch sits Silly. Hitch writes something on a piece of paper. Hoffman looks out the window and blinks.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – THE BOUTIQUE OPPOSITE TO THE BUILDING OF FUNERAL HOME “HON” – EVENING

It's twilight. Hoffman looks into the window of the boutique and sees ten dead women wander around the boutique. Some of them lean against the show-window as if trying to consider trying on the clothes on the mannequins. Hoffman takes a long fowling piece, and quickly aims and shoots at one of dead women. The dead woman twitches slightly, but remains standing.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Do you know what differs a Zombie from a normal person?

HITCH

What?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

A normal person truly believes their actions cannot be foreseen.

HITCH

Exactly. These zombies have already got me – seriously. This is the third boutique change in a year. These zombies do this every night. I don't know that to do with them. They should be in tombs.

Hoffman stands with a gun in the corner.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

They have only one target. During their lifetime they are materialistic, and even after their death they are the same. It's like autopilot. Predictable, programmed.

HITCH

Robobabies.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

(squeaky)

Darling? Darling? Let's buy a top, such a pretty top! So pretty! Let's? Let's buy a handbag! Let's buy shoes, darling? Let's? And let's buy this, and let's buy that!

(to the window, loudly)

Buy yourself a soul bitch!

Hoffman spits on the window with contempt. Hazon enters the room, clasping his trousers.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

So? Was the bitch good?

HAZONE

Oh yeah!

They laugh.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

I'm warning you. You can get addicted to dead bitches.

(laughing)

Silly! Hurry up and get in her before she cools down and decays.

He claps loudly, forcing Silly to think faster. Humpbacked Silly runs out from a room. The rest laugh.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

All right! Now shut up and put your thinking caps on. What about slogans?

Hitch gives to Harold a piece of paper with any literary trash on it.

HITCH

Well here... take it!

Hoffman frowns, as he reads it closely. In a few seconds he tears sheet apart.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Badly written. Something does not suffice. Let's sit down and flesh this out.

Hitch gives Hoffman his usual seat. Hoffman reflects for a moment and quickly writes something.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Hazone, Read this.

He hands Hazon the paper. Hazon reads it and laughs.

HITCH

Let me read it!

Hitch takes the paper and reads Hoffman's slogan. Hitch laughs like a madman.

HITCH

Hary, it's absolutely crazy, man!

They laugh so hard they grab at their stomachs.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

It's sharp! Coffins at a funeral will be like champagne on New Years Eve. Before you know it, the whole city will see the slogan!

HITCH

But the joke can be bad for us too.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

We're not breaking any laws sonny. We have the right to advertise the way we see fit for our organization.

HITCH

I don't know, I just don't know.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Don't you worry about it, it'll fall on me and I'll take care of it. Now that we have that out of the way, let's get out of here.

HITCH

And go where?

HAROLD HOFFMAN

(smiling)

Let's have a good time.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – SM "MALL OF AMERICA" – THE LATE EVENING

Tired Julia Shweetner leaves the centre. Loud music and a voice over the PA system is heard in the background. We see Christian's car parked outside. Julia walks up to it. Christian exits the car and their eyes meet.

CHRISTIAN

Hi darling. Tired?

They kiss.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
I already can't feel my feet.

CHRISTIAN  
Well, it was interesting?

JULIA SHWEETNER  
Yes. There were so many celebrities!

CHRISTIAN  
Well, sit down in the car. Have a rest.

They get into the car.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CAR – NIGHT

They are driving along. Julia yawns and stretches.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
I feel like the happiest woman in the world. I can't wait to be back to the quiet life and half way out of the city.

CHRISTIAN  
It'll be nice to have you back here when you're free from your infinite amounts of work.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
Everyone's eyes were shinning at the mall today, everyone there was so happy. It was really something to see.

CHRISTIAN  
One very smart man has once told me: "To find the meaning of the life – is to find happiness, and to find happiness – is exactly the meaning of the life".

Julia smiles.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
I simply adore you.

Julia kisses Christian, passionately drawing herself to his neck.

CHRISTIAN  
We need to talk in the bedroom...

JULIA SHWEETNER  
(Smiling)  
Oh, Christian...

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – THE SUPERMARKET – NIGHT

Hoffman and his gang get out of the jeep and walk toward the supermarket. The shop is closed. Nearby, in the dark, we see two guys discussing something.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Hazone! Shut these guys up, they're preventing me from thinking!

Hazone runs up to guys and strikes them with a shovel. They fall on the asphalt and lose consciousness.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Now let's get back to our plans. What do people need to survive with? Food, health treatments, entertainment... let's start by depriving people with food! Let's go Silly!

Humpbacked Silly quickly takes out four canisters of gasoline from the car, and a bottle of incendiary mix and six bricks.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Let's do this quickly. Break the windows, pour the gasoline, and set it on fire and get the hell out of here. Ready?

Hitch, Silly and Hazone nod.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Let's force them into hunger! Let's bring them to a life of ruin and hopelessness. No life, no light, no hope, only thoughts of death.

They quickly throw bricks into the show windows and pour the gasoline inside. In the supermarket, a flame flashes. They run away before it blows up.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

(Squeaky)

In the winter the sure way to be warmed up is to add spark!

The building sets on fire and blazes all around, a bright orange light can be seen from the skyline. They laugh and whistle.

HITCH

Holy shit!

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Having fun gentleman?!

HAZONE

How come we haven't done this earlier?

HITCH

This is crazy fun!

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Let's go boys! Get back in the car, we have more shops to burn!

HITCH

This is better than a holiday Harry!

HAZONE

Hell yeah!

Hitch and Hazone laugh joyfully as they look at a fire, like children watching fireworks for the first time.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Hurry up boys!

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CAR – NIGHT

Christian and Julia driving along at a great speed, as they catch the fire ravaging through the supermarket at the corner of their eyes.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Oh my God! Did you see that?! What's happening?

CHRISTIAN

I don't know. Let's go see.

Christian slows down and drives toward the incident.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – SUPERMARKET – NIGHT

Julia and Christian arrive just in time to see four people sitting in a black jeep. Julia looks into the car and see HAROLD HOFFMAN's silhouette, and notices his chain with a mini coffin hanging over his neck.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Oh my God. Christian, call the fire department asap!

CHRISTIAN

Ok.

Christian dials 911 on his cell phone.

JULIA SHWEETNER

I thought today was a perfect day, until now.

CHRISTIAN

Don't worry. There was nobody in shop at this hour. Hello! Emergency? There's a supermarket on fire! The address is...

Julie bites her lower lips as she looks at the burning building.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT – DAY

Julia and Christian sit by a window. Julia is dressed in a long red dress, Christian in a black suit and violet shirt. We see dishes, wine and a big bouquet of red, pink and yellow roses on the table. Sweet music plays in the background.

Julia plays with the flowers as she speaks.

JULIA SHWEETNER

Christian, you have an amazing sense of beauty. You put these together like a florist. They match my dress, the restaurant décor, just everything.

CHRISTIAN

With you, I see beauty of each color. You are my purpose and my award.

JULIA SHWEETNER

How did I get so lucky? Sometime I feel like I don't deserve a man like you – that men like you don't really exist.

Julia looks down at the flowers and smiles modestly.

CHRISTIAN

Believe me, I am not ideal. I often doubt myself. I have doubts about myself too sweetheart. Buy do you know why I gain more from being with you than you do with me?

JULIA SHWEETNER

Why?

CHRISTIAN

My boss. Employees with girlfriend's or wife's do better in the office and run less risk of getting fired.

JULIA SHWEETNER

(laughing)

Are you joking?

Christian laughs.

CHRISTIAN

I swear! My boss is a stickler about those things. He thinks that single people are unfortunate souls, or maniacs, and he favors employees with a partner.

JULIA SHWEETNER

(Laughs)

Oh my God! Christian! I'm like your work insurance!

CHRISTIAN

Nice insurance too!

Christian shoots Julia a loving look.

CHRISTIAN  
Close your eyes.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
What for?

CHRISTIAN  
Close them. It's a surprise.

Julia closes her eyes. Christian pulls out a gold bracelet from his pocket and clasps it on her hand.

CHRISTIAN  
Open.

Julia opens her eyes and sees the bracelet on her wrist.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
Oh my goodness! Christian! A gold bracelet! What a gesture!

CHRISTIAN  
Well, it is our anniversary remember?

Julia kisses him.

JULIA SHWEETNER  
I'm shocked. I have no words!

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS – THE CROSSROADS – DAY

Across from the Italian Restaurant we see the gang clearing the area around them of people, scaring children and security guards away.

HAROLD HOFFMAN

Ok boys have a look at that screen up there, we should be going live in a few minutes. I've paid good money for this!

They look up at the huge digital advertising screen. They look to it in anticipation.

Unexpectedly, the screen dies. In a few seconds on a black background we see a bright red inscription "COFFINS". From each letter, drops of blood flow. The gang shout in excitement.

HAZONE  
Harry. Look! It's up!

Harry looks up to the screen, putting his phone conversation on hold. On the screen there is an inscription:

You will fit in our coffins best  
Without the diet and the stress

FUNERAL HOME “HON”

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