

Dead Man Walking

[Phil. 321: Social Ethics](#)

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[Internet Movie Database](#)

Script Source:

http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/d/dead-man-walking-script-transcript.html



Dead Man Walking Script - Dialogue Transcript

Voila! Finally, the **Dead Man Walking script** is here for all you quotes spouting fans of the movie directed by Tim Robbins and starring Susan Sarandon as Helen Prejean and Sean Penn. This script is a transcript that was painstakingly transcribed using the screenplay and/or viewings of Dead Man Walking. I'll be eternally tweaking it, so if you have any corrections, feel free to [drop me a line](#). You won't hurt my feelings. Honest.

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Dead Man Walking Script

-Hi, Sister.

-Hi, Billie Jean. How you doing?

It's the late Sister Helen.
I've got a note from my mama, Idella.
Do you need a new notebook?

-Thanks.

-How about you, Melvin?
The resident council wants us
at their meeting tomorrow.

-Can you be there at 7:00?

-Yes.

-New poetry books.

-Your poem got all smudged.

Smudged?

Sister Helen, I got

another letter from that guy.

-Which guy is that, Luis?

-Angola inmate, death row.

-Oh, yeah.

-Could you write to him?
Sounds like he could use
some friendly words.

-I'll come up after the class.

-Okay.

-It got smudged.

-You can still read it.

"There's a woman standing there
in the dark.
And she's got big arms to hold you.
But you won't feel
those arms that hug...
... till you can see her face.
So you stand there waiting for
the light at the end of the road. "

Idella, that is so fine.

Thank you.

*"My lawyer seems to have disappeared,
so I need help on the legal end.
But if you can't do that,
I'd take a kind word or a visit.
Gets real quiet here sometimes. "*

None of these guys on the row
can afford an attorney for appeals.

You can imagine the calls
we get from death row inmates...

-...begging us to find attorneys.

-Who'll work for free.

Right. These petitions
take hours to prepare.
Attorneys aren't exactly
lining up for the job.

*"Dear Sister Helen,
thank you for writing to me.*

*I'm writing from my home.:
my 6-by-8-foot cell.
I'm in here 23 hours a day.
We don't work on death row.
We're special here. They keep us
away from the general population.
We're the elite because we gonna fry.
It's hard not to get soft here.
I press my footlocker, lift it,
to try to get my muscles in shape.
It's hard not to get fat.
Rice, potatoes, pancakes, beans.
Sometimes I feel like
a sow on a farm...
... that's being fattened up
for a Christmas slaughter.
I dreamt once that I was
about to be fried in the chair...
...and then God come into my cell
with a chef's hat on.
He rolled me around in bread crumbs,
licking His chops and all.
Maybe I'm a weirdo
to have dreams like that...
...but your mind does funny things
when you're surrounded...
...by people that want to kill you.
Anyway, thanks for writing.
I don't get many letters
or visitors either.
No one in my family seems able to make
the trip out here. I understand.
It's a long drive from Slidell. "*

-Good morning.

-Good morning, Father.

-Sister....

-Helen Prejean. Nice to meet you.

-Have a seat.

-Thank you.

-Have you been in a prison before?

-No, Father.

Sister Clement and I sang at the
New Orleans Juvenile Detention Center.
We sang "Kumbaya,"
and the boys really liked it.
They made up
their own verses, singing:

Someone's escaping, my Lord

The guards made us sing
a different song.

Where is your habit?

Our Sisters haven't worn
the habit for 20 years.

You are aware of the papal request
regarding nuns' garments, aren't you?

I believe the pope said
"distinctive clothing," not habits.

Well, I'm sure you'll interpret it in
your own way. Whatever's convenient.

Matthew Poncelet.
I remember him from the news.
Him and another fella...
...shot two children in the back
of the head on Lover's Lane.
Raped the girl.
Stabbed her several times.
Do you know what you're getting into?
So, what is it, Sister?
Morbid fascination?
Bleeding-heart sympathy?

He wrote me and asked me to come.

There is no romance here, Sister.
No Jimmy Cagney
"I've been wrongly accused.
If I only had someone
who believed in me" nonsense.
They are all con men.
And they will take advantage
of you every way they can.
You must be very, very careful.
Do you understand?

Yes, Father.

*These men don't see many females.
For you to wear the habit
might help instill respect.
For you to flout authority will only
encourage them to do the same.*

Woman on the tier!

You can wait there.
We'll bring your man out for you.

Well, Matthew, I made it.

Thanks for coming, ma'am.

Never thought I'd be visiting
with no nun.
So you're a nun.

Yep.

I'm here to listen. Whatever you
want to talk about is fine.

You're very sincere.

What do you mean?

You never done this before.

-Never been this close to a murderer?

-Not that I know of.

Lots of niggers down where you live.
They knock each other off
like beer cans off a fence.
When I got your letter,
I seen Helen on it.
I thought it was my ex-old lady.
Almost ripped it up.
She turned me in.
She called the cops.
Orphaned our kid, the stupid bitch.

-You've got a kid?

-Yeah, a con with a kid.

-Girl or boy?

-Girl.

-What's her name?

-You ask a lot of questions.

-I don't know you.

Yeah, well, never mind.
Your letter said
you work with the poor.
Your daddy was a lawyer?
You come from money, don't you?

Some.

And you live in St. Thomas Projects?
I don't know who's crazier, you or me.

-I live where I work.

-Yeah, in the slum.

What about you?

I live here.

You were brought up poor?

Ain't nobody with money on death row.

You and I have something in common.

-What's that?

-We both live with the poor.

Ain't you gonna ask me what I done?

-The chaplain filled me in.

-Oh, Farley?

Yeah, well, he's a very religious man.
I didn't kill nobody.
Carl went crazy on me.

-Carl?

Vitello. He ought to be sitting here.
He went nuts on me.
I was scared. Did what he said,
held that boy back. He killed them.

You watched him kill these kids?

I'll tell you the truth, ma'am.
Me and Carl were loaded on downs,
acid, booze when this happened.
I hadn't slept in two nights.
I was out of my head.
But I didn't kill them.
I didn't kill nobody.
I swear to God I didn't.

Ali.

-Ali?

-Her name.

She's cute.

Yeah, she's 11 or 12, I don't know.
She was born first time
I was in prison. I seen her once.

When was that?

When she was 3.

-Do you write her?

-I don't know where she is.
She's in Texas somewhere.
Foster parents.
Go on and finish up now, Sister.
Look.
They're about to go
on a killing spree here.
They're zapping
this guy Tobias tonight.
Guards are taking bets on who's next.
I'm at even odds. It's not good.
I got two chances: a pardon board
or a federal appeals court.
I wrote the motion on the appeal,
but I need someone to file it.
Can you help me with that?

You know how to write a motion?

You got no choice,
you learn the law real fast.
Call it special motivation.
I've been on death row six years.
I studied every law book
I could get my hands on.
I got this stuff about my case:
trial transcripts, legal papers.
They might help you get
ahold of my case faster.
You drop a dime and get a lawyer,
we can file a motion for appeal.
You ain't coming back.

-Are these your only copies?

No, but they're hard to come by.
I don't want to waste them.

I'll do my best.
And I appreciate your trust.

I'll tell you,
I don't trust nobody in here.

But you don't kiss my ass or preach

*that hellfire brimstone crap.
I respect that.
You got guts.
You live in a neighborhood
with every nigger carrying a gun.
Come on, Helen, hit it!*

Playing possum, huh?
Think you can trick us,
you dumb animal?
Think you can fool us?

How fast was I going?

-Seventy-five miles an hour, ma'am.

-Wow.

-You a nun?

-Yes, sir.

Never gave a ticket to no nun before.
Gave a ticket to a guy
from the IRS one time.
Got audited the next year.
Tell you what, Sister,
I'll let this slide.
-But keep your speed down.

-Yes, sir.

*On Friday night, Walter Delacroix,
age 17, and Hope Percy, 18...
...had been two happy people
celebrating a life-turning point.
They were shot twice at close range in
the back of the head with a .22 rifle.
In addition to murder, Poncelet
and Vitello face six counts...
...of aggravated kidnapping
and one charge of aggravated rape.
--handcuff the man and molest--
--four weeks before the murder
the two men allegedly cut...
...a wide path of terror
across the area.
A police spokesman said today,
in the wake of the murders--
Poncelet addressed
the judge as "Cap"...
...and smirked when they found him
guilty of murder today.*

Poncelet claims Vitello
killed both of them.

-Y'all think he's lying.

-Vitello accuses Poncelet.
Both say the other did the killing.
Somebody's lying to somebody.
They were both there. We know that.

Then how is it possible one guy
gets life, the other death?

Probably a stronger case
against Poncelet.

Vitello had a better lawyer.
Created a reasonable doubt
in the jury's mind.
And Vitello gets life, Poncelet death.

Bad luck.

He needs help, Sister.

There's a lawyer, Hilton Barber.

He's aware of the case, told me no.
Maybe you can change his mind.

With the aim of a new trial
and getting him out?
I'm not sure I want to run
into this guy on the street.

He's not getting off.
He was an accomplice. That's life.
Life sentences in a
Louisiana prison is for real.
I'm trying to stop the State
from killing him.

You want out?

It's cool with me.

You don't have to go back there.

Get tough on sentencing.
Get tough on lenient parole boards.
Get tough on judges
who pass light sentences.

-Hello.

-Sister Helen?

-Who's this?

*-Matt Poncelet.
I know I'm on death row, but there's
guys been here years and years.
I didn't know this was coming.
They set a date.*

-For what?

*-They're gonna kill me.
It's gonna go down on the 13th.
You need a lawyer
to get a pardon hearing.
I'd do it myself if they'd let me.
But they say, "No lawyer, no hearing. "*

I think I know of a lawyer
that may be able to help you.
And I'll do my best, all right?

*Sister, come through for me.
You're all I got.
They got me on a greased rail
to the death house.
I ain't heard from you.
You ain't fading out on me, are you?*

I'll get you the lawyer.
Just try not to worry.
-I'll call you soon.

-All right. Bye.

*As far as I'm concerned, it's time
the State got with the program.
Call me sentimental,
but I'd rather see him fry.
Barring any last-minute
appeals or stays...
...he'll die under the State's new
execution procedure.: lethal injection.*

-Hello.

-Luis, this is Helen.
I need the name of that lawyer
you wanted me to talk to.

-How long you been doing this?

-Doing this?

-Counseling death row inmates.

-I'm not counseling him.
I hardly know him, just met him once.

-What's your impression?

I don't know if I like him.
He needs help.
Best thing was to bring him to you.

Well, I'll do my best.
Courts don't want to hear appeals
on death penalty cases.
You can even have
new evidence of innocence...
...and the court won't hear the case.
We're the pariahs. We're--

"Have many rabbit."

Think that's a "for sale" sign
or a cry for help?
Or is it bragging?
Imagine that poor guy.
Bought two rabbits a year ago
and now he's overrun.
Coming like popcorn.
Day before the governor
runs for reelection...
...they set a date for my execution.
Show how tough he is on crime.
I agree with you. Politics did
play a big part in this decision.
But the pardon board
isn't a place to bring it up.

-Why not?
-It's full of political appointees.

Governor's appointees.

They don't want to hear some convicted
killer telling them they is bunk.
We have to present you as a person
and convince them to spare your life.

We have to prove I'm innocent.

We'll file appeals with
the federal and supreme courts...

...but this is a pardon board.

They won't care if you shot the gun.
They'll be thinking of the crime.

And of you as a monster.

It's easy to kill a monster

but hard to kill a human being.

We need people like your mama...

...to speak on your behalf.
She should be there.

She'll just cry till she can't
say nothing, she gonna be so torn up.

Be that as it may,
your mama should be there.

-She'll hear the Delacroixs, the--
-If she's not there--

Excuse me for butting in.

You're right, it's gonna
be upsetting for her.

But she's your mama, Matthew.
Your mama.

She should have the opportunity
to speak for her child.

-She'll just blubber her head off.
-Well, she has the right to do that.

What if you die and she hasn't
had a chance to speak for you?

Don't you think it'll eat at her,
wondering if she could've saved you?

I'll think about it,
but I got my pride.

I won't kiss ass in front of these
people. I won't kiss nobody's ass.

-What are you making, Kenitra?
-An Easter card for Mama.

-What's that?
-Easter Bunny going down a chimney.

Happy Easter.

Yes?

Mrs. Poncelet?

No.

Mrs. Poncelet, please.

Don't live here.

Who is it?

My name is Sister Helen Prejean.
I know your son Matthew.

Happy Easter.

-You sure you're a Sister?

-Yes.

-You're not from the TV?

-No.

You sure?

How do you know Mattie?

I met him on death row.

Well, you never know
who's at your front door.

So, what do you want? Mattie send
you for money, for cigarettes?

No.

So, what do you want?

You know they set the date
for Matthew's execution.

Yeah.

Prison called, said if it goes down,
do I got death insurance?

Ha! What a laugh.

I ain't even got food money.

His pardon board hearing
is this Wednesday...

...and his lawyer thinks it'd be
a good idea if you were there.

What does Mattie think?

He's worried.

He wants to protect you.

Well, it's a little late for that.

That show *Inside Crime*
did a thing on Mattie...

...and told how I tried
to help him and everything.

A regular Ma Barker or something.

Now I'm famous.

Yesterday, I was in the store...

...and I see these
two ladies eyeing me.

When I get closer,
I hear one of them say:

"I just can't wait to hear that
they have executed that monster...

...Matthew Poncelet."

That's cruel.

My boys are having
a real hard time at school.

Kids picking on them.

Beating them up, calling them names.

Someone put a dead squirrel
inside my little Troy's locker.

Poor boy came home crying.

What did he ever do to anyone?

Just keep trying to figure out
what I done wrong.

Life's plowed them over. He started
getting in trouble when he was 15.

-Every kid does when he's 15.

-His dad was never around.

Most of your kids in the projects
are raised by single parents.

They're not raping and killing.

You're being suckered.

There you go again, Louie.

What about the parents
of these victims?

-Are you seeing and counseling them?
-You think they'd talk to me?

Aren't there people in your
neighborhood that need help?

Yes, Mom.
I'm still working with them.

Why visit murderers?
They're at the end of the line.

For all the energy and resources
you're putting into them...

...you could be keeping
other kids from going to prison.

Mama's friends, the Pierres,
read an article...

...which mentioned your name
with Poncelet.

My name was in the paper?

It has nothing to do with that.
I am just curious.

Helen, what has drawn you to this?

Mama, I don't know.

I feel caught more than drawn.

The man's in trouble and, for some
reason, I'm the only one he trusts.

Your heart's in the right place...

...but a full heart
shouldn't follow an empty head.

Or an empty stomach.

As a child you always
brought home strays.

If we'd taken in all those dogs and

cats, we couldn't have fed the family.

Your heart is large.

Just take care that others
don't take advantage of it.

I'd hate to see that.

All right, Mama.

My daddy took me to a bar
when I was 1 2...

...and told me to pick my whiskey.

There was all these bottles
behind the bar and I said:

"I'll take that one
with the pretty turkey on it."

The guys in the bar
laughed their butts off.

We got drunk as coots that night.

My daddy was a good man.
Sharecropper, hard worker.

That's the one thing I got from him:
working hands.

-How old were you when he died?
-1 4.

Why's you a nun?

I was drawn to it, I guess.

That's a hard question to answer.
It's like asking why you're a convict.

-Bad luck.
-Good luck, then.

I had a loving family,
a lot of support.

I guess I felt obliged
to give some of it back.

Don't you miss having a man?

Don't you want to get married,
fall in love, have sex?

You don't want to talk about it?

Well, I have close friends,
men and women.

I haven't experienced sexual intimacy,
but there's other ways of being close.

You sharing your dreams,
your thoughts, your feelings.

That's being intimate too.

We got intimacy right now,
don't we, Sister?

I went to see your mother.

She said she'd appear
at the pardon board hearing...

...if you want her to.

I like being alone with you.

You're looking real good to me.

Look at you.

Death is breathing down your neck...

...and you're playing your
little-man-on-the-make games.

I'm not here for your amusement,
Matthew. Show some respect.

Why? Because you're a nun
and you wear a little cross?

Because I'm a person.
Every person deserves respect.

What's the answer?
What'll it be with your mama?

Mattie had a hard life...

...but he was a good boy.

When he was 6, he--

He--

Ladies and gentlemen, let's be honest.

You're not gonna find
many rich people on death row.

Matthew Poncelet's here today
because he's poor.

Didn't have money so he had
to take what the State gave him.

He got a tax lawyer who'd never
tried a capital case before.

An amateur.

The jury selection took four hours.
The trial lasted five days.

The lawyer raised one objection
the entire trial.

Now, if Matthew
had himself Man Walking some money...

...well, he could've hired
a team of crackerjack lawyers...

...and they would have hired top-notch
investigators, a ballistics expert...

...a psychologist to compile
profiles of desirable jurors.

And you can be sure...

...Matthew Poncelet wouldn't be
sitting here today before you...

...asking for his life.

The death penalty.

It's nothing new,
been with us for centuries.

*We've buried people alive,
lopped off their heads...*

...burned them alive in public,

gruesome spectacles.

I wanted them to see these pictures.

In this century, we kept searching

for more and more humane ways...

...of killing people we didn't like.

We've shot them with firing squads,

suffocated them in gas chambers.

But now....

Now we have developed a device...

...that is the most humane of all:

Lethal injection.

We strap the guy up. We anesthetize
him with shot number one.

Then we give him shot number two
which implodes his lungs.

And shot number three stops his heart.

We put him to death
just like an old horse.

His face just goes to sleep...

...while inside, his organs
are going through Armageddon.

His facial muscles would contort, but
shot number one relaxes those muscles.

So we don't have to see
any horror show.

We don't have to taste
the blood of revenge...

...while this human being's organs
writhe, twist, contort.

We just sit there quietly,
nod our heads and say:

"Justice has been done."

It has been six years since the
brutal and reprehensible murders...

...of Hope Percy and Walter Delacroix.

And justice is long past due.

Matt Poncelet has had a lengthy,
thorough court review.

Both a trial and
a retrial for sentencing...

...as well as many appeals
to state and federal courts...

...and successive petitions
filed by Mr. Barber.

There's been no doubt in the
court's mind about who did the murder.

Matthew Poncelet is not a good boy.
He is a heartless killer.

These murders were calculated,
disgusting and cruel.

This man shot Walter Delacroix
two times in the back of his head.

And raped Hope Percy
and stabbed her 17 times...

...before shooting this sweet girl
two times in the back of the head.

These families...

...will never see their children
graduate from college.

They will never attend their wedding.

They will never have Christmas
with them again.

There will be no grandchildren.

All they ask of you is simple justice
for their unbearable loss.

I ask you to take a breath...

...steel your spine...

...and proceed with the execution
of Matthew Poncelet.

It's always a good sign
when you have to wait.

-I don't know if we made any headway.
-I thought you did great.

It'd be best if they realized their culpability in the death of a man.

-Hilton.
-Excuse me, Sister.

I'm Walter Delacroix's father.

-Mr. Delacroix, I'm sorry about--
-Sister, I'm a Catholic.

How can you sit by Poncelet's side without ever having come to visit...

...with me and my wife or the Percys to hear our side?

How can you spend all your time worrying about Poncelet...

...and not think that maybe we needed you too?

Mr. Delacroix, I didn't think that you wanted to talk to me.

Earl, we're going in.

This is Mary Beth and Clyde Percy.

-I'm sorry about your daughter.
-Yeah, so are we. Excuse us.

Listen, Sister...

...I'm sure you've seen a side of Matt Poncelet that none of us has seen.

I'm sure he's on his best behavior, must be pretty sympathetic to you.

But, Sister, this is an evil man.

This is a man who abducted teenage kids and raped...

...and killed them.

That scum robbed me of my only son.

My name....
My family name dies with me.

There will be no more Delacroix,
Sister. No more.

I want you to know I do care
about you and your family...

...and what happened to your son.

I'm gonna give you my number...

...and if there's anything
that you need, you just call me.

Me call you?

Think about that, Sister.
Think about how arrogant that is.

Excuse me.

You all right?

We better be getting on in.

It is the finding of this board
that clemency...

...be denied to Matthew Poncelet.

Execution will be carried out
as scheduled one week hence.

Don't give up hope, Matt.

We got a judge in the Federal Court
that can put a stop to this.

Beyond that there's the
Supreme Court and the governor.

I'll get a private meeting
with him if it's the last thing I do.

Looks like you're all I got.

I can have a spiritual adviser
of my choice. Will you do it?

Ride along into the sunset with me.

*You'll have to spend several hours
with him every day as his death nears.*

Then on the day of his execution,
you'll have to spend all day with him.

It's not an easy job.

Usually, it's done by a chaplain
or a priest or a Moslem cleric.

I want you to be realistic about this.

We've got about a one in one thousand
chance things might go our way.

It's a tough road.

If that had been a king,
you could go back over, right?

You can jump three this way
then go all the way back.

She got that big old bad joker and
won't put it down. That's a shame.

My turn. My turn.

I got an ace. I'm really lucky.

-Whose was this?

-Mine.

Don't kill him. He's a child of God.

He's reformed. He's a poet.

Blah, blah, blah.

*Attention all ye folks, ye advocates
of killers and child molesters.*

Ye opponents of execution.

Ye cannot walk upon the high ground.

*Ye do not have the moral
authority to walk there.*

*Ye traverse with scum
and scum is where--*

-What do you want?

-Forgive me for intruding...

...but I haven't been able to get
you and your wife out of my mind.

I've been trying to call you,
but there's been no answer.

Can I please speak with you?

Sure.

I'm really sorry for not coming to visit with you before this...

...but I've never been involved in anything like this before.

Truth is you're scared.

Yes.

I'd be too.

-Come in.

-Thank you.

Well, Sister...

...can I ask you a question?

-Are you a communist?

-Communist? No.

I didn't think so.

That's what people around here say...

...with you defending this murderer, but I didn't think so.

-Sit down.

-Thank you.

-Care for some coffee?

-Thank you.

I'm sorry about the mess.

My wife and I had a big fight.

We got back from the pardon board hearing.

She took Walter's clothes out of his closet, put them in boxes...

...called Goodwill.

She says she wants to put the past behind her.

She says she has to move on in her life.

She's not herself Man Walking.

That must be so hard.

When it first happened,
she had me bring her...

...to Walter's grave every morning.

She wept a river, poor woman.

Whole days, nights, for weeks, months.

I wish there was some way...

...some key into the past
to change it.

It tears me up.

She used to be a ball.

We would have us some fun.

Some times.

Laugh.

Laugh our heads off.

Walter learned to walk
on this floor right here.

He busted his chin on the arm
of that sofa right there.

And that love seat right there...

...he sat with Hope...

...a week before they died.

When you lose a child...

...all the memories get sealed
in a place.

Sealed...

...like a shrine.

So you've put in a request...

...to be the spiritual adviser
to Matthew Poncelet.

-Yes, Father.
-Why?

He asked me.

-This is highly unusual.
-Why?

-You'd be the first woman to do it.
-Really?

This kind of situation requires
an experienced hand.

This boy is to be executed in six days
and is in dire need of redemption.

Are you up to this?

I don't know, Father. I hope so.
I've been praying for guidance.

You can save this boy...

...by getting him to receive
the sacraments before he dies.

This is your job.

Nothing more, nothing less.

If you need any help,
please feel free to call on me.

Thank you, Father.

I don't want to be buried here.

They're gonna call my mama,
ask about the funeral arrangements.

Could you do it?
My mama'd fall apart.

I'll do it.

Do you ever read the Bible?

I ain't much of a Bible reader,
but I pick it up from time to time.

-Like W.C. Fields read his Bible.
-Who?

W.C. Fields. He used to play
this drunken character in the movies.

He's dying and a friend comes
and sees him reading the Bible.

The friend says,
"W.C., you don't believe in God.

Why are you reading the Bible?"

And Fields says,
"I'm looking for a loophole."

I ain't looking for no loophole.

Rain, rain, rain.

That's a bad sign. They already
executed one black, Tobias.

Wayne Purcell tonight.
That's two blacks.

Time for a white.

The governor's under pressure
to get a white. And that's me!

Nigger on the gurney before me.
I hope they clean it before me.

-Was your daddy a racist?
-What kind of question is that?

-I wonder who taught you to hate.
-I don't like niggers.

Have you known any blacks?

-They was all around--
-All around?

Lived around me.

-Did you ever play with a black child?
-No.

-Me and my cousin got jumped once.
-What happened?

We was throwing rocks at them.
The next day, they tear our bikes up.

-Can you blame them?
-No. But, look, slavery's long over.

They're harping

on the bad deal they got.

-The kids?

-All of them.

I hate people who make themselves out as victims.

-Victims?

-Yeah, they all victims.

I don't know any victims.

I know some cool people, hard-working.

I know a lot of lazy, Dead Man Walking are-taking coloreds sucking up tax dollars.

-You sound like a politician.

-What's that mean?

-Ever been the object of prejudice?

-No.

What do people think about inmates on death row?

-Why don't you tell me?

-They're monsters.

Disposable waste, good-for-nothings sucking up tax dollars.

I ain't no victim. I'm innocent.

I ain't whining. I ain't sitting on a porch going "slavery, slavery."

I like rebels, some blacks.

Martin Luther King led people to D.C., kicked the white man's butt.

-You respect Martin Luther King.

-He put up a fight, wasn't lazy.

-Lazy whites?

-Don't like them.

-So it's lazy people you don't like.

-Can we talk about something else?

Jesus also said, "He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword."

Purcell had it coming!

He had it coming!

Nine, eight, seven...
...six, five, four...
...three, two, one.

It's the only way we can be sure
that they will not kill again.

Life without parole? Oh, sure.

How many prison guards do they have
to kill before it's over?

These people are mad dogs. Maniacs.

Come on. Let's go.

If the governor
and the courts turn us down...

...Matt's gonna be dead in six days.

We gotta get us a funeral home
and someplace to bury him.

Maybe our sisters will donate
one of their burial plots.

Somebody to do the burial service.
Clothes.

I guess a suit.

Suit?

What size suit do you think he wears?

I don't know.

How tall is he?

I don't know.
I think he's kind of big.

What size is kind of big?

Does it run like big,
medium and petite?

Well, I don't know. I never bought
a man's suit before.

Won't you be a pretty sight?

A nun shopping for a man's suit.

I'm out of my league.

This is so surreal.

Hope had just graduated
from high school in early May.

She was to join the Air Force
on June 1 5th.

That's the day it happened.

She almost got out of Slidell.

She was hoping
to get stationed overseas.

She liked to travel...

...and loved being around people
of different cultures.

On June 1 5th, a recruiting sergeant
was to meet Hope in Slidell...

...and drive her to Baton Rouge
for induction.

The day before, I took her shopping
for things she'd need...

...you know, just practical things.

That evening at 5:00 she dressed...

...and went to work
at Corey's where she waitressed.

After work, she had a date
with Walter.

She was about to leave....

The hem of her skirt was coming out.

She was in such a hurry.

*I pinned it for her with one
of those tiny safety pins.*

She was gone out the door.

*You don't know when you see
your child leave...*

*... that you're never gonna
see them alive again.*

If I'd known that...

...I would have told her
how much I love her.

You know, my last words to her...

...the last that she ever heard
from me...

...were about the hem of her skirt.

Next morning we waited
for her to come out.

This was Hope's big day.

Our baby was leaving home.

*Her room was empty...
...and the bed was still neatly made.*

So I telephoned the Delacroixs and....

Our hearts sank
when the Delacroixs told us...
...that Walter hadn't come home
that night too.
And then for one brief moment
we thought...
...maybe they'd run off
and gotten married.

But we knew that she was just too
sensible to do something like that.

I went down to the police and
filled out a missing person's form.

*Three days later the sheriff
formed a search party.
I went along with them.*

*They were gone all day.
They walked for miles and nothing.*

On Thursday, June 20th...
...some kids were out
near Flank's Cove...
...and they found a purse
and some clothing and a wallet.
They turned them in to the police.

They found the kids' bodies
on Friday...
...six days after they'd gone missing.

My daughter's body was nude...
...legs spread-eagle.
Coroner's report said
that her vagina was all tore up.
At first they couldn't find
this class pin she was wearing...
...because it was embedded so deep,
from the stabbing.
She loved that pin.
She was so proud of it,
and she wore it all the time.
It said, "Class of '88
making a difference."

The police wouldn't let us go down
to the morgue and identify the body.
They said it would be too traumatic.

But I just couldn't...
...bear the thought
of them burying that body...
...without making absolutely and
positively sure that that was Hope.
I called my brother, he's a dentist.
I asked him to go
to the funeral home...
...and make an I.D. from dental records.

Before he'd stuck his hand
into that bag...
...with all that lime in it
and fished Hope's jaw out...
...he'd been against
the death penalty.
And after that, he was all for it.

I knew it had to be Hope.
That's what my mind told me, you know,
but I just, I had to be sure.

-This is Sister Helen Prejean.

-Hello.

-Nice to meet you, Emily.

-Okay.

Okay.

Let's go in the kitchen.
I'll make us some coffee.

*I met Poncelet face to face
in the hallway during the trial.*

I ain't gonna get no chair, Daddy.

You're gonna fry,
and I'm gonna watch you sizzle.

*There was a sheriff standing
pretty close by me.
I could have grabbed his gun and shot
Poncelet right then and there.
I could've killed him on that day,
and I wished I would have.
I'd be a happier man today.*

So, what made you change your mind?

Change my mind?

What made you come around to our side?

I wanted to come and see if I could
help y'all and pray with you.

Thank you.

But he asked me to be his spiritual
adviser, to be with him when he dies.

And what did you say?

That I would.

We thought you'd changed your mind.
We thought that's why you were here.

No.

-How can you come here?

-How can you do that?
How can you sit with that scum?

Mr. Percy, I've never done
this before.
I'm trying....
I'm trying to follow
the example of Jesus...
...who said that every person
is worth...
...more than their worst act.

This is not a person.
This is an animal.

No, I take that back. Animals don't
rape and murder their own kind!
Matthew Poncelet is God's mistake.
And you want to hold
the poor murderer's hand?
You want to comfort him when he dies?
There wasn't anybody in the woods
to comfort Hope...
...when those two animals pushed
her face into the grass!

I just want to help him take
responsibility for what he did.

Does he admit to what he did?
Is he sorry?

He says he didn't kill anybody.

You're in waters way over your head.

You don't know what
it's like to carry a child...
...and give birth and get up with a
sick child in the middle of the night.
You pray and get a good night's sleep.

My parents raised me
to respect the religious.
Sister, you need to leave
this house right now.

I'm--

Wait a minute!
If you really are sorry...
...and do care about this family...
...you'll want to see justice done
for our murdered child!
Now, you can't have it both ways!
You can't befriend that murderer
and expect to be our friend too.

You brought the enemy into this house,
Sister. You gotta go.

*I come from a good family.
My family can't be blamed.
I had two families.
Both of them I'd love and die for.*

*-Your other family is... ?
-The family of man. Of men in prison.
My white family,
the Aryan Brotherhood.*

*You're a white supremacist?
A follower of Hitler?*

*He was a leader. I admire him
for getting things done.
Like Castro, he got things done.
Hitler might have gone overboard
on the killing...
...but he was on the right track.*

*The right track?
The murder of 6 million Jews?*

What am I doing with this guy?
I must be nuts.

-Hello?

*-Sister? It's Hilton Barber.
We need you
for a strategy meeting.*

"In an interview with the *Times*...
...Poncelet says that
if he had to do it again...
...he'd do something useful
like join a terrorist group...
...and bomb government buildings."
We must get him off
this political prisoner kick.

Henry, how close are we
on the Supreme Court docket?

-In a couple of days.

-We don't have a couple of days!

-We don't have the legal staff.

-You had it for three days.

-Where were you yesterday?

-I had to take my kid to the dentist.

A man is gonna die on death row and--

Yeah, well, my kid needed
to hold her daddy's hand.

If you don't like it, find another
lawyer to volunteer his time.

People reading these interviews
think you're a nut.
Admiring Hitler, wanting to come back

as a terrorist and blow people up?

I said government buildings,
not people.

Bombing a building won't hurt people?

I ain't got no love
for the government is all.

You're a fool. You are making it
so easy for them to kill you.
Coming across as some crazed animal...
...Nazi, racist mad dog
who deserves to die.

-Is that what you think?

-You're making it so hard to help you.

You can leave.

I'm not gonna do that.
It's up to you.
You want me to go, you say so.
-Do you ever think about those kids?

-It's terrible what happened.

Especially since it didn't
have to happen.
Do you ever think about what
you did to their parents' lives?

It's hard to have sympathy for them...
-...when they're trying to kill me.

-Think about it.

Their kids are shot, stabbed, raped...
...left in the woods to die alone.

How'd you feel if somebody
did that to your family?
-What would you do to them?

-I'd sure as hell want to kill them.
I understand them, but they're
calling for the wrong head.
I want to take a lie detector test.
I know it won't change
them guys' minds...
...but I want my mama to know
I didn't kill any kids.

The boy's good!

Go.

-Hey, y'all. Having a party.

-Hey.

Palmer.

-Herbie, how's your side feeling?

-Okay.

-Yeah? Kenitra, how are you doing?

-Fine.

Come on, Kenitra, let's go.

Bye-bye.

Wait a minute, what happened?

There's talk in the neighborhood...

...of Poncelet's racist comments.

Your name was in the article.

Oh, Lord.

The learning center also misses you.

They think you care more

about him than your classes.

-Colleen, I'm so sorry.

-It's all right. I still love you.

I just thought you should know.

Oh!

Got this at Goodwill.

Talked to Bishop Norwich.

He said he would say the funeral mass.

Also found a funeral home

willing to donate their services.

The leaders of the congregation met.

We can use one of our burial plots.

If Matt dies...

...guess who he'll be buried next to?

-Who was the last person to die?

-Sister Celestine.

Oh, Lord.

Remember when that girl

came to the convent...

...to introduce her husband to us?

Celestine said, "I'm glad I won't have to share my bed with a man."

-She loved her celibacy so much.

-And now....

She's gonna be lying next to a man for all eternity.

[group therapy]

My daughter's killer can possibly get out on parole in another year--

Recently, my wife and I went to the sheriff's office--

I just can't bear the thought of him being out, a free man...

...and her buried in the ground and dead forever.

"Don't know nothing about these--"

--was killed by her ex-husband, you know.

--stabbed to death in our back yard by my son's best friend.

He'd spent the night at our house and gone to church with us that morning.

I lost my child--

Her little skiing outfit is still in the closet.

When our child was killed, it took over a week to find her body. --staring out the window.

The D A's office treated us like we were the criminals.

My wife...

...filed for divorce this afternoon. We just have different ways of dealing with our son's death.

"Until death do us part."

We're nothing special.
Most folks that lose a kid split up.
Seventy percent or something.
I just wish I could laugh,
find something funny.
This is my car.

Thanks for inviting me, Mr. Delacroix.

You take care, Sister.

Good night.

What the fuck you doing?
What you doing?

Raise your arms.

Go ahead.

Have a seat in that chair.

Like my new digs?

Hi.

I'm pretty special, huh?

I'm pretty special.
Have this place all to myself Man Walking.

They got like 10 guards guarding me.

One guy comes every 1 minutes
to see if I killed myself
Suicide watch.
Suicide watch.
Never had so many people
caring about what I was doing.

When did they bring you here?

Last night.
Late.
Didn't get to say goodbye
to most of the guys on the row.
Did you take care of that
lie detector test yet?

I made some calls,
but I haven't had any luck yet.

So this is the end, huh?
My death house vacation.
Three days of quiet.
Plenty of time to read my Bible.

Look for a loophole.

Look for a loophole.

Did you read anything
about Jesus in that Bible?

Holy Man. Did good. In heaven.

Praise Jesus.

There are some passages in there...
...about when Jesus
was facing death alone...
...that you might want to check out.

Me and Jesus have a different way
of doing things.
He's one of them
turn-the-other-cheek guys.

It takes a lot of strength
to turn the other cheek.
You say you like rebels.
What do you think Jesus was?

-He wasn't no rebel.

-Sure He was. He was a dangerous man.

-"Love your brother" is dangerous?

-Because His love changed things.
His love changed things.
The people nobody cared about: the
prostitutes, the beggars, the poor.
They finally had somebody
who respected them, loved them...
...made them realize their own worth.
They had dignity and became powerful.
The guys on the top got real nervous.
So they had to kill Jesus.

Kind of like me, huh?

No, Matt, not--
Not at all like you.
He changed the world with His love.
You watched as two kids were murdered.

Step back from the door, Sister.

Why? What's happening?

Move it on out, boy.

What's this now?

What's this?

He'll be an hour.
Why don't you get some air?

-Where are they taking him?

-I can't tell you.

Sister Helen?
Chaplain Farley called from the gate.

-He'll be right here.

-Thank you.

Sergeant Trapp?

How long do you think that
big old tree's been standing there?

Ma'am, there ain't no telling.

Saw you outside the gates the other
night at Purcell's execution.

Yeah?

You seemed upset.

Upset? No.

-You in the room when they did it?

-I'm on the strap-down team, left leg.

That's my job. The left leg.
I take the prisoner from his cell
to the execution chamber.

Wow, that's gotta be tough.

It's hard.
I didn't sleep that night.

I think it's gotta affect
everybody that sees it...
...whether they're for it or against.

It's just part of the job.
These prisoners gets
what's coming to them.

It's easy for someone

to come and make...

...a rash judgement on procedure.
What may appear on the surface
to be irrational or unnecessary...
...proves upon examination
to have solid reasoning...
...and experience behind it.

All I'm asking is to play a hymn
for Matt before his execution.

And experience tells us
that music stirs up emotion.
Emotion that can produce
an unexpected reaction in the inmate.

All right.

Do you have any objection to my asking
the warden for his opinion?

I would oppose it,
but you may if you like.

Thank you.
And thank you for your time.

I hear you were protesting outside
the gates during the last execution.

-Yes.

-You familiar with the Old Testament?

"Thou shalt not kill."

"If anyone sheds the blood of man...

...by man, shall his blood be shed."

Are you familiar
with the New Testament...
...where Jesus talks
about grace and reconciliation?

Poncelet has to understand
that Jesus died for his sins.
If he accepts that...
...reconciliation is his
and his soul shall have eternal life.
One's opinion of the death penalty
is not the issue here.
Look at Romans.
"Let every person be subordinate
to the higher authorities.
For there is no authority,
except from God.
And those who oppose it
will bring judgment upon themselves."

What happened?

-She collapsed.
-She had a heart attack.

-I'm okay. I think I just fainted.

-No, don't you move.

I'm hungry. I just need to eat.

I told Matt I'd be back.
Could you tell him what happened?

-When we're finished here.

-I've gotta tell him now.

I'll take care of it, Sister.

-Thank you.

-This isn't a heart attack.
I'm just hungry.
They don't let visitors eat here.
They must think we're some kind of
ferns that feed on air or something.
Is that the machine
that they use after an execution?

Yes, ma'am.

Just have to be official
about the whole thing.

Thank God we're off the chair.
It's a bit easier to take the needle.
Just part of the job.
Let's get some food in your stomach.

Who puts the needle in?

That's private information.

Is it you?

We cannot disclose any specifics
regarding execution procedure.

Let me get you a tray of food
and then we'll send you on home.

-I've gotta get back to Matt.

-I'm sorry, Sister.
This is warden's orders.

You're through for the day.

-Where'd you go?

-I couldn't come back.

-You all right?

-I'm fine.

I kept asking what happened.
I thought you had a heart attack.

-They said they'd tell you.

-They took me into that room.
-They was weighing me.

-What for?

To see how big a coffin I need.
Then I come back and you were gone.
I spent the whole day alone.

I'm sorry.
I'm so sorry.

-You ever get lonely?

-Yeah. Sure.
Sometimes when I smell the smoke
from the neighborhood barbecues...
...and I hear all the kids laughing...
...and I'm sitting in my room,
I feel like a fool.

What I miss most being here? Women.
You know, I used to sit at the bar,
just drinking and listening to music.
I'd dance till 3:00 in the morning.
I ain't gonna lie.
I believe in doing it.
My lady and I'd grab
a bottle, blanket, some weed...
...go out in the woods,
and we'd do it.
It's something you miss, ma'am.

Let's face it, Matt.
If I had a family...
...chances are I'd be with them now
instead of visiting with you.

True enough.
I'm glad you're here.

You want me to get a message
to your daughter?

Let her be.

Those things will kill you.

I won't let them break me.
I just pray God holds up my legs
on my last walk.
It's the wait.
It's the countdown that gets to you.

We'll know soon
about the federal appeal.
Hilton and I got an appointment
with the governor this evening.

Fat chance he'll do anything.
Risk his political butt for me?
I wish I hadn't said all that shit
about Hitler and being a terrorist.
Stupid!

Hartman says there won't be
any more media interviews.

Good. Keep my stupid mouth shut.

I was able to arrange a lie detector
test for tomorrow morning.

All right. There's some good news.

The man that's gonna give the test...
...doubts they'll get
an accurate reading of the truth.

-Why?

-Tomorrow's the day of your execution.
You'll be stressed. The test
often mistakes stress for dishonesty.

No problem. I'm home free.

You been reading your Bible?

I tried to last night.
Makes me want to sleep.
I'm trying to stay conscious.
I appreciate you trying to save me...
...but me and God,
we got our thing squared away.
Jesus died on the cross for us.
And I hold He'll take care of me when

I appear before God on Judgment Day.

Matt, redemption isn't some
kind of free admission ticket...

...you get because
Jesus paid the price.

You gotta participate
in your own redemption.

You got some work to do.

I think maybe you should look
at John, chapter 8, where Jesus said:

"You shall know the truth...

...and the truth shall make you free."

I'll check it out. I like that.

"The truth shall make you free."

I like that.

So I pass that lie detector test,
I'm home free.

If you do die...

...I want to help you die
with dignity.

You can't do that...

...unless you own up to the part you
played in Walter and Hope's death.

-Hilton Barber, Bishop Norwich.

-Hello.

Pleasure, Bishop.

Here's the situation.

Governor Benedict is a reluctant
supporter of capital punishment.

He has the power to stop
this execution and save a life.

It's the last vestige
of the divine right of kings.

The trick is, we have
to appeal to him...

...on a personal level,
without any fanfare.

So I requested a private meeting.

You must understand. In representing
the State, I must carry out the laws...

...and must submerge
my own personal views...

...to carry out the will
of the people.

I'll look at this case.

But unless there's some clear,
striking evidence for innocence...

...I will not interfere
with the process.

We still got the court, Sister.
We might hit pay dirt
on one of the legal issues.

Helen.
Helen, come to dinner.

*You're looking for a love
that's so big, it takes in all evil.
Annunciations are common.
Incarnations are rare.
You're not a saint, Helen.*

Helen. Helen.

Oh, Mama.

Are you okay?

Oh, yes. I was just dreaming.

What time do you have to be there?

9:00 sharp.

Did you set a clock?

Yeah.
Oh, it's so bizarre.
A man's gonna be killed
in front of me tomorrow.

Has he admitted anything?

Oh, no.
He's so full of hate,
he doesn't trust anybody. He just--
He keeps pushing me away.

You're in deep water, kid.

Do you remember
when you gave me a black eye?
I had a fever.
You were delirious,
hysterical, screaming.
You were trying to get up
and run into the street.
You socked me in the eye
and you said you hated me.
You screamed, but I held you.
I held you tight.
Because a mother's arms are strong...
...when her child's in danger.

I didn't sleep at all last night.
I didn't take that nerve medicine
they wanted to give me.
I'm looking death in the eyes.
I mean, I'm getting ready to go.

Listen, Matt, I want you to know
that I respect your need for privacy.
If you want to be alone or want
to be just with your family today...
...I won't be offended.

Be there, if it won't put you out.
I want somebody to talk to
and be there to the end.

I'll be there.

If only I knew I'd die right away
with the first shot.
I mean, will I feel it?
The lungs go first. Like a...
...fast choke.
That's gotta hurt.
They say that...
...the body doesn't move.
Doesn't shake.
My poor mama.

Any word from the 5th Circuit?

*None yet. But that's a good sign.
Maybe that means they see
something substantive in the petition.
-Gotta go. I'll call later.*

-Thanks, Hilton.

-Bye.

-Bye.

Tell me something, Sister.
What is a nun doing
in a place like this?
Shouldn't you be teaching children?
And you know what this man has done.
How he killed them kids.

What he did was evil.
I don't condone it.
What's the sense in killing
to say killing is wrong?

You know how the Bible says,
"an eye for an eye"?

Know what else it asks for?

Death as a punishment
for adultery, prostitution...
...homosexuality,
trespass upon sacred ground...
...profaning the Sabbath
and contempt of parents.

I ain't gonna get in no Bible quoting
with no nun because I'm gonna lose.

She was only on the phone
a few minutes and there she was...
...falling for the old Matt charm.
I had to take back that phone. You're
trying to steal my gal, you dog.

She sounds like a great little gal.

-She ain't so little, though.

-You shut up.

Take care of her, Craig.
Don't do nothing stupid.
She looks a little bit like...
Who was your girlfriend
in high school?

I had lots of girls in high school.

-No, the one with the funny name.

-Funny name?

Maddie, Maldy-- Maldy? Maldy.

-Madrigal.

-Madrigal.

Madrigal Parmelee. Oh, she was hot!

-She was a nasty little thing.

-Matthew!

Sorry, Ma. I mean, she was
a fine upstanding young woman.
How about you, Troy?
Got yourself a little girlfriend?

-No.

-Why not?

I ain't got time.
Too much fishing and camping to do.

-Troy just got a new tent.

-What kind of tents you got?

Army tent. Not them sissy ones
with all the colors.

-Tell Matt about the other night.

-He was camping in the yard.

Oh, I made him come in.
I was worried.

I went out and made him come inside.

-Mama, that ain't what happened.

-Go on.

-Go on. Tell him.

-Come on.

Me and my buddy Paul put up this tent,
cooked our own dinner.
We roasted potatoes in tin foil on
the fire and cooked us some weenies.

Then what? Go on.

-About midnight—

-No, about 9:00, I think. Yeah.

-We heard some kind of animal.

-What kind was that?

-It was big.

-Was it a bunny?

-Was it a possum?

-Shut up.

-Was it a squirrel?

-Was it a mouse?

Shut up! It was big and nasty.

Hey, look me in the eye, little man.
You go inside because Mama said so
or were you scared?

Now, tell the truth.

Look me in the eye.
We got him.

Some people are asking
about your funeral...
...and I get real angry and I say,
"He's not dead yet."

Sorry, folks, we gotta wrap this up.

A little early, isn't it?
Rules say they can stay till 6:45.

It's time for you folks
to be leaving now.

-Here you go, Poncelet.

-Thanks, man.

My stuff's in these pillowcases.
Better if y'all took it home with you.
Don't want the prison sending it.
Craig, divide up all the stuff
except my boots from Marion.
I want to walk to my execution
in these here boots.

Up on your feet.

You all say your goodbyes now.

See you later, Matt.

-Bye.

-No goodbyes, little man.

-No, ma'am.

-Can't she hug him?

I'm sorry, Sister. Security reasons.

Don't cry, Mama.
I don't want to see no crying.
I'm not saying goodbye now.

-I'll call you tonight.

-See you, Matt. Stay strong.

Don't cry. I'll call you later.

We love you, Mattie.
If I'd put my arms around my boy,
I'd never have let go.

Is my mama all right?

She's fine, Matt.

All right. Goodbye.

I never had shrimp before.
They're pretty good.
So, what did he say? What's the word
on the lie detector test?

Culp said your answers
showed stress...
-...and the results were inconclusive.

-Man.
Was the dude sure?
Absolutely, positively sure.
I felt all right answering them
questions. I didn't feel no stress.
I can't believe I failed.

Matt, you'd have to be a robot
or insane not to feel stress now.

I can't believe it didn't
come out right.

Let's talk about what happened.
Let's talk about that night.

I don't want to talk about that.

[murder scene]

-Get out.

-You're pretty.

-Trespassing.

-What?

-You're trespassing.

-We'll leave.

-Let's go!

-You're under arrest. Step out.

We'll leave. We didn't know.

Get out of the car!

-Where are we going?

-There's a bar back here.

-Our boss's in the bar.

-Can't let you go, you've been bad.

-Our boss is gonna be pissed.

-Maybe he'll let you go.

Well. Here we are.

This is the bar.

-Can we get you a drink?

-Kneel down.

I'm pissed off!

I'm pissed at the kids
for being parked.

At the parents coming to see me die.

At myself Man Walking for letting
Vitello get them kids.

I got a thing or two to say
to the Percys and the Delacroixs.

You want your last words
to be words of hatred?

Clyde Percy wants
to inject me hisself!

Well, think of how angry he must be.

He's never gonna see
his daughter again.

He's never gonna hold her,
love her, laugh with her.
You have robbed these parents.
They have nothing in their lives
but sorrow, no joy.
That is what you gave them.

Why were you in the woods?

-I told you, I was stoned!

-Don't blame the drugs.

You were harassing couples
for months before this happened.

-What was it?

-What do you mean?

Did you look up to Vitello,
think he was cool?

Did you want to impress him?

-I don't know.

-You could have walked away.

-He went psycho on me.

-Don't blame him!

You blame him, the government,
drugs, blacks, the Percys.

You blame the kids for being there.

What about Matthew Poncelet?

Where's he in this story? What,

is he just an innocent? A victim?

I ain't no victim.

Poncelet.

Federal Appeals Court turned you down.

I'm sorry.

Sister, please step into the corridor.

I'll be right outside.

I'm sorry, son.

I feel like I failed.

No, you didn't fail. I appreciate
everything you done for me.

What is she typing?

Forms for the witnesses to sign.

You didn't fail.

The justice system failed me.

It stinks. It stinks bad.

I'll head out there.

Oh, God, help me.

This is such a terrifying place, Lord.
So cold. So calculated, this murder.
Just don't let him fall apart, God.
Oh, help him stay strong. Help me,
Jesus, stay strong. Help us, Lord.
Help us stay strong. Help me.

They shaved the calf of my leg.

Why?

I guess they was worried
they won't find a vein in my arm.

What's that number?

I put it on at Marion.
In case somebody killed me,
they could identify my body.

Did it hurt when you got all those?

You seeing these tattoos,
you gonna think I'm a bad person.

You just have more color
on your body than I thought.

Tried to give me two shots.
A sedative and an antihistamine.

-Antihistamine?

Guess if I had an allergic reaction
to the shot that knocks you out...
...it gets messy.
Come on, I want to give you...
...my Bible.
I dated it myself.

Thanks, Matt.

Step back from the cell, Sister.

Time to call home.
Will you stay?

I'll stay. I'll just give you some privacy.

Hey, man.

What're you doing?

You know what I'm doin'. What are you doing?
The time's clicking away.

-Hi.

-Hey.

-What you doing? Grabbing the phone?

-Yep.

-Gonna sleep in your tent tonight?

-Yeah, I am.

Mama, I'm waiting to talk to you.
Don't cry, Mom. Don't cry.
Don't cry.
That's not the way it was, Mama.
That's not the way it was.
I was....
I was small.
I can hear him. Let me talk to him.
Hey, Troy. You take care of Mama,
okay? All right, little man?
You take care of Mama.
Mom? Mom?
I love you, Mom. I love you, Mom.

I just let it flow.
Told my mama I loved her.
I talked to each of the boys.
I hate saying goodbye.
I just told them if I get a chance,
I'd call right before I go.

What, Matt?
What is it?

My mama kept saying,
"It was that Vitello."
She always regrets
that I got involved with him.
I didn't want her thinking that.
It was something you said.
I could've walked away.
I didn't.
I was a victim.
I was a fucking chicken.
He was older and tough as hell.
I was just...
...boozing up, trying to be
as tough as him. I couldn't.
I didn't have the guts
to stand up to him.
I told my mama I was yellow.
She kept saying, "It wasn't you, Matt.
It wasn't you, Matt. It wasn't you."

Your mama loves you, Matt.

That boy?
Walter?

Yeah?

What?

I killed him.

And Hope?

No, ma'am.

Did you rape her?

Yes, ma'am.

Do you take responsibility
for both of their deaths?

Yes, ma'am.
When the lights dimmed last night
I kneeed and prayed for them kids.
I never done that before.

Oh, Matt.

There are spaces of sorrow
only God can touch.

You did a terrible thing, Matt,
a terrible thing.

But you have a dignity now.
Nobody can take that from you.
You are a son of God,
Matthew Poncelet.

Nobody ever called me
no son of God before.
Called me a son of you-know-what
lots of times, never no son of God.
I just hope my death
can give them parents some relief.

Maybe the best thing you can give...
...to the Percys and the Delacroixs
is a wish for their peace.

You know I never had
no real love myself Man Walking.
Never loved a woman
or anybody else myself Man Walking much good.
Well, it figures I'd have
to die to find love.
Thank you for loving me.

Oh, the time. It's been flying.
I'm really cold.

Can he have a jacket or something?
He's cold.

What happened to that song
you were gonna play for me?

The hymn?
They have a rule you can't
have music in the prison.
Yeah, so they won't let me play it.

Well, you know the words.
You can sing it.

-I can't sing.

-That's okay. Come on.

[Sr. Prejean sings.]

Thank you.

I need you to step
into the corridor, Sister.

Give me my boots! I want my boots!
A grown man going to his death
in a diaper and slippers.
I'll be done with all of this!
No bars, no cells, no life in a cage!

Matt.

Sister Helen...
...I'm gonna die.

You know truth.
The truth has made you free.

God knows the truth about me.
I'm going to a better place.
I'm not worried about nothing.
You all right?

Yes. I'm okay.

-Christ is here.
-I won't worry about anything.

Okay.
Look, I want the last thing
you see in this world...
...to be a face of love.

So you look at me...
...when they do this thing.
You look at me.
I'll be the face of love for you.

Yes, ma'am.

Time to go, Poncelet.

Can Sister Helen touch me?

Yes, she may.
Dead man walking!

"Do not be afraid.
For I have ordained thee.
I have called thee by thy name.
Thou art mine.
Should thou pass through the sea...
...I shall be with thee.
Should thee walk through the fire...
-...thou shall not be scorched."

-God have mercy on your soul...
...in the name of the Father,
Son and Holy Spirit.

That's as far as you go, Sister.

Will you check in on my mama
from time to time?

Yes, Matt. You have my word on that.

Do you have any last words, Poncelet?

Yes, sir, I do.
Mr. Delacroix...
...I don't want to leave this world
with any hate in my heart.
I ask your forgiveness
for what I done.
It was a terrible thing I done
in taking your son away from you.

How about us?

Mr. and Mrs. Percy...
...I hope my death
gives you some relief.
I just want to say...
...I think killing is wrong...
...no matter who does it.
Whether it's me or y'all
or your government.

I love you.

I love you.

No! No!

Get off of her!

I'm out of here!

Come on, boy!

*May the love of God and the peace
of our dear Lord Jesus Christ...*

...bless us and console us...

*...and gently wipe every tear
from our eyes. Amen.*

May Almighty God bless you...

*...the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Go now in the peace
and love of Christ.*

Thanks be to God.

Now, you're gonna be strong
for your mama.

Mr. Delacroix.

-Sister.

-It's good to see you.

I don't know why I'm here.
I got a lot of hate.
I don't have your faith.

It's not faith.

I wish it were that easy.

It's work.

Maybe...

...we could help each other find
a way out of the hate.

I don't know.

I don't think so.

I should go.

Evening.

-Good evening.

-Good evening.

Hi, Idella.

Herbie!

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