

RUNAWAY GHOST

Written by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

CRAIG BRYANT, 32, sits on the couch in the living room. Or rather, he hovers above the couch in an attempt to appear to be sitting. Craig is a ghost. There is a mountain of translucent paperwork hovering next to him, and he fills each one out and stamps it when he is finished. After it's stamped, the paper disappears. He does this for a bit until he hears gunshots from the house next door. He looks up startled, and floats over to the window. A new ghost, BOB CUNNINGHAM, 48, floats up from the floor. Through his window Craig sees him blink as his eyes adjust to the afterlife, which is brighter than what humans are used to. He spies Craig through the window.

BOB

(Silent)

Hey, where are we? Is this heaven?  
I sure hope not cause it looks just  
like the goddamn dump I just left.

Craig gestures to Bob to stop, tapping his ear to signal that he cannot hear him. Craig holds makes a phone shape with his left hand, and grabs it with his right, pulling away a ghost phone on a wire attached to his stump. Craig gestures for Bob to do the same. Bob does.

CRAIG

(Into the phone)

Operator, ghost from Ms. Mcfeely's  
old place please.

The phone clicks into connection.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Hello neighbor!

BOB

What in the hell's going on?

CRAIG

More like what in the purgatory.  
Welcome to ghosthood! My name's  
Craig, I'll be your neighbor for  
the next 12 years.

BOB

12 years?! Why am I in purgatory  
for so long? I ain't do nuttin!

CRAIG

Oh no, that's just how long I'm  
here. You haven't even been  
sentenced yet.

BOB  
Sentenced?? For what? I told you, I  
ain't do nothing!

CRAIG  
Tell that to the judge. What's your  
name by the way?

BOB  
Bob.

Another phone clicks onto the line and LINDA CUNNINGHAM, 42,  
pops into view next to Bob.

LINDA  
And I'm Linda!

Bob turns angrily and pushes Linda out of view again. He puts  
the phone against his chest to keep Craig from hearing.

BOB  
(Muffled)  
Look here, stay out of my business  
woman. You're the one who got us  
into this mess, so kindly let me  
just talk to our neighbor.

Bob picks the phone back up and looks apologetically back at  
Craig.

CRAIG  
Who was that?

BOB  
My bitch wife. Is marriage still a  
thing in the afterlife?

CRAIG  
I mean, not officially.

BOB  
Oh thank god.

LINDA  
(From offscreen)  
Oh thank god!

CRAIG  
How did you two get here anyway? I  
heard some noises that uh, didn't  
sound too good.

BOB  
Let me explain. So I just got off  
of work right.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

I had a terrible day, so I sit down, kick my feet up, and ask my woman to bring me my dinner.

LINDA

(From offscreen)  
Getting muddy footprints all over my books by the way.

BOB

She brings me a plate, and for the 4th time this week everything is burnt black. I point this out to her-

LINDA

(From offscreen)  
He called me a worthless good-for-nothing slut, among other things.

BOB

And she starts talking back to me and I just couldn't take the disrespect anymore.

Linda floats back into view.

LINDA

What he's saying is that he shot us over my cooking.

CRAIG

That seems a little, uh, extreme Bob.

BOB

If you had to put up with what I have do...

Bob peers out of his window into the sky.

BOB (CONT'D)

What I had to, I guess...what's that?

Craig looks to the sky too.

CRAIG

Oh god, He gave you Wells! One of you is in for it.

BOB

I told you, I ain't do nuttin!

LINDA

I mean, I wasn't the one who shot  
us over a steak so...

Before Bob can respond a deafening fanfare blasts and 2 angels swathed in golden glows glide into Bob and Linda's home. They are ISAIAH COMBS, 28, a gigantic muscular man in all black carrying a scroll, and ROSIE WELLS, 7, a young girl dressed in judges robes that are a few sizes too large. A judges's bench appears and Rosie climbs up to sit. She produces a large legal pad and a box of crayons. Isaiah unfurls the scroll and begins to read.

ISAIAH

Robert Herbert Cunningham, 48, and  
Linda Elizabeth Cunningham, 42?

LINDA

That's us.

Isaiah notices Bob is missing his hand and shoots him a withering glance.

ISAIAH

Robert, please put your hand back.

Bob looks at the phone.

BOB

I don't know if I know how to do  
that.

Isaiah rolls his eyes, puts the scroll down on the bench, and instructs Bob on how to replace his hand. The sound cuts off, and Craig presses one of his fingers like a button and speaks into it again.

CRAIG

Operator, can you buzz me into the  
courtroom?

OPERATOR

I'll connect you to Judge Wells,  
but I can't promise anything.

CRAIG

Thanks.

A toy phone appears on Rosie's desk and she picks it up cheerily.

ROSIE

Hello, Rosie's Pizza Shop! Free  
pizza everyday! What do you want?

CRAIG  
Judge Wells, I was wondering-

ROSIE  
My name's Rosie.

Craig holds back frustration.

CRAIG  
Rosie, I was wondering if I could  
watch the hearing.

ROSIE  
Oh, yeah! Isaiah will put you on  
the tv. There's free pizza if you  
want it! Bye bye, love you!

Rosie puts the phone down and taps Isaiah on the shoulder and says something to him. He nods, and a tv appears in appears in the court room. Craig holds his hands flat side by side and screen displaying what the tv sees pops up in the air in front of him. He can hear again.

ISAIAH  
Your honor, who do you want to go  
first?

ROSIE  
Nice lady please! Hold on.

She scribbles something and holds up a crayon drawing of something that could be Linda. Linda looks flattered.

ROSIE (CONT'D)  
This is you. Do you like it?

LINDA  
It's precious, thank you!

Rosie turns to Isaiah and nods determinedly.

ROSIE  
Nice lady. Go head.

Isaiah unfurls the scroll again.

ISAIAH  
Linda, please step forward.

She obliges.

ISAIAH (CONT'D)

You have committed major crimes against food, but lived a good life of caring for people. Do you have anything to say for yourself?

LINDA

Food crimes count?

ISAIAH

Every crime counts, including that chocolate bar you stole from Home Depot 8 years ago.

LINDA

I forgot about that. I'm so sorry.

ISAIAH

Do you believe the charges to be unfair?

LINDA

No sir.

ISAIAH

Judge-

ROSIE

My name's Rosie.

ISAIAH

Rosie, what do you sentence Linda for food crimes?

ROSIE

A HUNDRED MILLION YEARS!

She bangs her crayon box like a gavel.

ISAIAH

Rosie. Focus please.

ROSIE

Ok, uh... I'll give nice lady 6 years.

ISAIAH

And for other assorted crimes including white lies, messiness, and chocolate bar theft?

ROSIE

Um, 2 years.

ISAIAH

Very good. Linda, you will serve 8 years of light labor in your home, and then you will be given you wings and allowed into heaven.

LINDA

Yes sir.

ROSIE

8 years!

She bangs her crayons once more, and a LED screen appears on the front of the bench and displays 8 years. Airhorns go off.

BOB

Why is she banging her crayons like that?

ROSIE

God's a big meanie and don't let me have a hammer anymore.

ISAIAH

She threw her gavel at too many newcomers. God figured crayons were less damaging. Thank you Linda. Robert, please step forward.

She nods and steps back. Bob steps up to take her place.

ISAIAH (CONT'D)

Robert-

BOB

Hold up, I have a couple things to say. One, I ain't done nuttin. Two, I was told I was going to heaven when I die, so what's all this purgatory bullshit? Three, she deserves way more than 8 years. Also why is a child deciding this stuff? I demand a competent judge decide our cases.

Isaiah and Craig look panicked. Rosie draws herself up and stares him dead in the eyes.

ROSIE

I am more competent of a judge than you could ever dream of being. I have spent 300 years in this position, I understand what crimes deserve what punishments.

(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

God trusts me to lay down  
punishments on his people because  
he knows I am capable, so I kindly  
ask you to shut your mouth and let  
me do my job. Give him 5 years for  
disrespect of me before we even  
begin Isaiah.

Isaiah nods and clears his throat.

ISAIAH

Robert Cunningham, you have lived a  
life of disrespect of authority,  
women, property, and most other  
people. Among other things you are  
being charged with business  
malpractice, swearing in front of  
children, tax fraud, kicking  
puppies, murdering your wife,  
suicide, and putting gum in kids'  
hair in 2nd grade.

BOB

Look, most of that stuff was a one  
off ok. Like I only cheated my  
taxes that one year, and that gum  
shit barely counts.

ISAIAH

More swearing in front of a child.  
Rosie, what do you sentence him?

ROSIE

450 years of nothing but paperwork.

ISAIAH

Please be serious your honor.

ROSIE

I am. No one acts like that for 38  
years and gets away with it.

Isaiah is speechless.

BOB

That is RIDICULOUS. I demand a new  
trial-

ROSIE

I demand you to shut up or you get  
another 100.

Bob shuts up. The courtroom is silent for a moment, and then the display shows 450 years and the airhorns go off really aggressively.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Are we done? Magical Fairy Princess Adventures comes on in 5 minutes.

ISAIAH

I guess so. You'll get more information on your job assignments when you're visited by your supervisors tomorrow. Good day.

ROSIE

Byeee!

The desk and tv disappear and the angels fly away.