

Mortal Audit

By

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(Lights up on an apartment, somewhere in the city. A man in a business suit, SINCLAIR SINCLAIR, is sitting in a chair reading out of a manila folder. He has a professional-looking briefcase next to him. The door of the apartment opens and MARIA ST. JOHN enters.)

MARIA.

Jesus Christ!/ Who are you and what the hell are you doing in my apartment-

SINCLAIR.

/Using the lord's name in vain. We are not off to a good start.

MARIA.

Get out. Now!

SINCLAIR.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves. My name is Sinclair Sinclair. I represent the law firm of Sinclair, Sinclair, and More Sinclair. I am here on behalf of the Man Upstairs.

MARIA.

Oh, shit did the landlord send you? If this is about the boxes I'm not moving out I'm building a new computer-

SINCLAIR.

Michael didn't say anything about you "moving out." Another mark.

MARIA.

Who's Michael?

SINCLAIR.

Michael. You know, Michael. From upstairs?

MARIA.

What happened to Zach?

SINCLAIR.

Nothing. At least, nothing to my knowledge.

MARIA.

Then why are you talking about some guy named "Michael"?

SINCLAIR.

Because he commissioned me.

MARIA.

He's the man upstairs?

SINCLAIR.

No. No no no not at all. He works in the same office.

MARIA.

So does Zach, doesn't he?

SINCLAIR.

No.

MARIA.

I think we're talking about two different things.

SINCLAIR.

I'm talking about Michael. You know, the Archangel.

MARIA.

Angel? Like, wings and harps and halos angels?

SINCLAIR.

Bunch of dandies with iPods these days, but more or less yes.

MARIA.

You honestly expect me to believe there's an angel in my living room?

SINCLAIR.

No of course not-

MARIA.

I'm calling the police.

SINCLAIR.

I'm not an angel, I'm a lawyer.

MARIA.

A lawyer working for the archangel Michael? Seriously? What are you from heaven's legal department?

SINCLAIR.

Um, how do I put this? There's not an abundance of lawyers upstairs. Something about false oaths and cheating and all of that. So, Michael had to outsource. I'm your auditor.

MARIA.

Since when did angels start audits?

SINCLAIR.

It's a new program they've rolled out. Upstairs is revamping their image to be more modern-

MARIA.

Thus audits. Oh joy.

SINCLAIR.

It's a quick sin assessment. Really low stakes, honestly.

MARIA.

You're auditing my sins?

SINCLAIR.

Yeah. Peter at the pearly gates- oh, sorry, that's the old term, now it's the grand doors. Peter at the Grand Doors has too much of a backlog so they're trying to streamline the process.

MARIA.

You would think sin audits would be making national news. Or at least a BuzzFeed article.

SINCLAIR.

You were chosen as the first. OH! I completely skipped a step! SURPRISE!

(SINCLAIR puts on a party hat and blows a sad looking party noisemaker.)

Congratulations! You've been chosen as the subject of the first Angelic Audit! Yay!

MARIA.

Yelling surprise only works right when you surprise someone.

SINCLAIR.

Sorry. I forgot. I know it lost a little impact. Do you want a hat?

MARIA.

NO! I don't want a hat!

SINCLAIR.

Noisemaker?

MARIA.

What?

SINCLAIR.

"I was audited by divine and all I got was this lousy T-Shirt"?

MARIA.

What is wrong with you?

SINCLAIR.

Oh, I was sick over the weekend. That's why my voice sounds weird. I haven't quite recovered.

MARIA.

No, I mean with your brain. Do you need help, do I need to call someone?

SINCLAIR.

There's nothing wrong with my brain. It's fully recovered.

MARIA.

From what?

SINCLAIR.

The longer you ask these silly questions the longer this is going to take. I have to audit you and then like a foul odor on a windy day I will vanish from your life but a small part of me will linger on in your nose and mind.

MARIA.

Fine. I'll humor you and do your stupid interview.

SINCLAIR.

Excellent. Now, Ms- how embarrassing I didn't account for your preference. Do you like Elizabeth, or Lizzie, maybe an Eliza? Feeling edgy like Lizbeth?

MARIA.

Maria.

SINCLAIR.

Or West Side Story. Why would you go by Maria?

MARIA.

It's my name.

SINCLAIR.

Oh. I can't read my own handwriting. Apologies, Maria.

MARIA.

How would you get Elizabeth from Maria? Are you trying and failing to make fun of me or-

SINCLAIR.

Never attribute to malice what can adequately be explained by stupidity, my dear.

MARIA.

So you're admitting you're stupid?

SINCLAIR.

Fred would be so disappointed.

MARIA.

WHO THE FUCK IS FRED?

SINCLAIR.

You're not half the woman Mr. Rogers knew you could be.

MARIA.

That- that was cold.

SINCLAIR.

You're the one who called me stupid.

MARIA.

I didn't, you did!

SINCLAIR.

That doesn't sound like something I would say.

MARIA.

Ugh. Just- get on with your audit or whatever.

SINCLAIR.

Right. So, this is all very low-key. Low stakes.

(Sinclair pulls out a clipboard and pen from his bag.)

We're going to go through a list of damning sins and check off whichever ones you're guilty of. Any check will send you straight to hell, no passing go or collecting two hundred dollars, just an eternity of torment.

MARIA.

Oh, yeah. Totally low stakes.

SINCLAIR.

So there's no reason to lie to me- though I am legally obligated to inform you that lying to me as an outsourced solicitor for the heavenly host, eh company upstairs, is counted as perjury and will be a mortal sin and a check mark.

MARIA.

Well. That's pleasant. Is there any hope I can get out of this without being set on fire- forever?

SINCLAIR.

Yes. Just don't sin.

MARIA.

But if I already have-

SINCLAIR.

Build a time machine and go back in time and stop yourself from sinning, I guess.

MARIA.

When the best solution you can give me is creating a time paradox I think I'm screwed.

SINCLAIR.

Like a cabinet from Ikea, my dear. Now, first question. Have you ever missed mass?

MARIA.

I'm not a catholic.

SINCLAIR.

Ooh. Oh dear.

MARIA.

I go to church, though! Service on Sundays! 9 am.

SINCLAIR.

And have you ever, in your twenty-three years, missed a Sunday?

MARIA.

I was sick last week.

SINCLAIR.

And yet another check! In five minutes, you've been damned thrice over. Move over Dr. Faustus, the devil will have a new favorite sinner.

MARIA.

That's not fair! I was sick, I went to the doctor-

SINCLAIR.

Did you get a note?

MARIA.

My employer likes to have them on file so yeah I did.

SINCLAIR.

Just mail it upstairs and everything will be fine.

MARIA.

How would I even do that?

SINCLAIR.

Well, burning a bush is the most popular option but we also accept letters by dove and reaching out in dreams.

MARIA.

That's not complicated at all.

SINCLAIR.

Have you ever killed anyone?

MARIA.

No.

SINCLAIR.

Have you ever wanted to kill anyone?

MARIA.

I- well, I can't lie cause that will be another damn check mark so yeah I've wanted to kill someone before.

SINCLAIR.

That's close enough! Check.

MARIA.

I didn't! Doesn't that count for something?! Restraint's a virtue!

SINCLAIR.

Reward you? No this an audit. It is strictly punishment.

MARIA.

God damn it.

SINCLAIR.

And you took the Lord's name in vain again. It's not looking good, Maria.

MARIA.

I think I hate religion.

SINCLAIR.

And there's another one. Do I check Atheist or Agnostic..? Why not both! More checks!

MARIA.

I think I might actually commit murder before this is over.

SINCLAIR.

I've already checked that box, it's not like you can be double-damned for the same thing.

(MARIA lets out a cry of frustration.)

SINCLAIR. (cont'd)

Don't take it so hard. If you get ten or more checks you're entitled to a free coffee and your choice of pastry at the 9th Circle Cafe down in hell. Lucifer'll even stamp your hell loyalty card.

MARIA.

You're fucking with me. You've got to be.

SINCLAIR.

Speaking of, I'm just going to assume you've had extramarital sex. It's normal. Still a mortal sin.

MARIA.

I'd say something but you're not listening to a word I say so I guess I'm going to hell.

SINCLAIR.

Now, what about drug use?

MARIA.

Purple monkey dishwasher.

SINCLAIR.

I knew it! Another check.

MARIA.

This is a complete and utter farce.

SINCLAIR.

How about homosexual actions?

MARIA.

That's not even a sin!

SINCLAIR.

It says so on my clipboard.

MARIA.

Your clipboard is wrong. And you're an asshole.

SINCLAIR.

This is true but you still have to answer the question. Scissor me timbers?

MARIA.

I'm not even going to answer that.

SINCLAIR.

Come on, simple question. When people see you walk into a room, do they think they're safe from the rivers tonight?

Shut up.

MARIA.

I'm not attacking you.

SINCLAIR.

Yes you are. Stop.

MARIA.

Well, aren't you a cunning linguist?

SINCLAIR.

I'm not.

MARIA.

Then why get so defensive?

SINCLAIR.

Because I don't believe that it's a sin. I can't agree with that. You're wrong and your clipboard is wrong.

MARIA.

And I can't believe it's not butter, but that just gets me cookies with a terrible texture. How do you feel about the poor?

SINCLAIR.

They need help and good christian charity if that's still part of the new updated version of heaven.

MARIA.

Okay, no check there. What about the rich?

SINCLAIR.

They should help the poor. Distribute the wealth more equitably so we can all live in harmony together.

MARIA.

Well, slap my butt and call me Joseph McCarthy, you're a fucking communist! That's another check!

SINCLAIR.

How can that possibly be a check? Communism wasn't around in biblical times.

MARIA.

Yes, but, my law firm gets government funds so this whole audit is technically sponsored by America. Damnation, brought to you by freedom!

MARIA.

Shut up. Shut the fuck up. I'm not going to listen to another word of this bullshit.

SINCLAIR.

You're quite angry Maria. That's another check-

MARIA.

No. No it's not. I don't care about your checks and about your commission or your audit or any of the rest of nonsense that's been spewing out of your mouth. None of what you've been talking about is a damnable offense. None of it! I don't believe you-

SINCLAIR.

You would not understand divinity if Jesus himself descended from on high and broke wind in your face-

MARIA.

Fuck off! That's the stupidest thing I ever heard. Just get out of my apartment and take your audit with you.

SINCLAIR.

So you accept hell?

MARIA.

No. I don't. I don't accept hell and I certainly don't accept whatever the fuck bizarro thing you're representing either.

SINCLAIR.

Oh? Not a fan of heaven?

MARIA.

You're not from heaven. You're not divine. You're not on commission from God you're just some judgmental asshole with a clipboard. Your "sins" are just being human! Yeah, I'm not perfect but I don't think that means I'm going to hell either. So fuck you. Fuck your clipboard. And fuck the weather. I am not damned to hell.

SINCLAIR.

No you're not! Surprise!

(He blows the party noisemaker again.)

Congratulations! You've passed the test!

MARIA.

This was a test?

SINCLAIR.

Of course! Wasn't that obvious? If that really was a list of mortal sins I'd be representing downstairs, not upstairs.

MARIA.

Oh. I thought it was all dogma.

SINCLAIR.

It was. All dogmatic mortal sins. Man, what a bunch of bullshit, am I right?

MARIA.

So... I'm not going to hell?

SINCLAIR.

Not at the moment. All this? Forgivable. Seriously. If all of these things actually sent you to hell, heaven would be three dudes and a cat.

MARIA.

But the audit-

SINCLAIR.

It's more of guidelines than hard and fast rules, you understand.

MARIA.

Thank God for that.

SINCLAIR.

I'll do it in my report. Lollipop?

MARIA.

What?

SINCLAIR.

(Producing a lollipop from his bag.)

You know, like the dentist. You do the bad thing, you get a lollipop.

MARIA.

Do I look like I'm twelve years old?

SINCLAIR.

No. Still, it's free candy.

(MARIA sees the wisdom in this and takes the lollipop, unwrapping and sucking on it.)

Annnnd... Check.

(MARIA looks confused and annoyed. Sinclair laughs. Handel's "Messiah" plays for a few moments. Blackout.)

Curtain.