

The Verdict

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A gray, rainy day. A hurried gaggle of people, from all angles, are trodding up steps, filing in through a set of massive pillars and into the courthouse.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A loud bang of the gavel silences the anticipation as the wigged JUDGE, in black, calls the court to order.

JUDGE

This man. This man before you,
stands accused of compunction. A
crime of the highest order in this
land, punishable by death.
Untenable are his actions toward
the citizens of this land, thus the
citizens, his peers, will judge him
rightly and hand down his
punishment accordingly.

We tour the faces of the random jury, who are all wearing some version of gray and white clothing, some faces in disgust, some in vengeance, some in vial hatred. The public, also in gray and white, softly murmurs amongst each other which quickly crescendos into a loud rant. Banging the gavel again, the Judge calls for order.

JUDGE

Order! Order! Has the jury
reached a verdict?

The JURY FOREMAN slowly stands, paper in hand.

JURY FOREMAN

Yes we have your honor. For the
crime of compunction, we the jury
find the defendant...

Time stops. Along the walls are portraits of great men, painted with judging eyes seemingly fixed to the MAN on trial. The MAN is sitting, his defender next to him wearing dark glasses. Slowly we close in on the man's face, silent, sullen, defeated, a bead of sweat appearing on his brow.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The courthouse steps are accommodating a grandstand for a parade which is marching down the streets. From the MAN's perspective we see a marching band, floats, flags, old men on tractors, furry mascots tossing candy to the children, smiling teenage girls in lovely gowns waving to the jubilant crowd, who are all dressed in some form of yellow and white. Victory signs are scattered throughout the crowd, this is a very patriotic parade.

The JUDGE is seated behind a podium among other distinguished onlookers, still in the wig, minus the robe, smiling, nodding to his fellow men.

Down the parade route a group of brightly uniformed soldiers comes into view, marching in lock-step, which brings the entire crowd to their feet in a massive cheer of joy and appreciation.

As the soldiers get closer we see what could be a circus wagon, a cage on wheels, housing a throng of foreign POW's in dirty robes, ratted hair and beards, chained by hands and feet, sitting in the center is their leader, the VILE MAN. At the top of the wagon is a sign in bold black letters which reads, 'ENEMY.' Seeing the circus wagon, the crowd immediately turns vicious, booing, hissing, shouting angry taunts. Out of the crowd a spectator throws a shoe, which bounces off the cage, stunning the Vile Man, who upon closer inspection has a scar across his cheek and is missing two fingers from his left hand.

The wagon reaches the center of the Grandstand, stops, and is immediately surrounded by many of the soldiers. This brings the crowd to a new level of hate. Standing slowly, receiving a few encouraging handshakes and pats on the back from his fellow men, the JUDGE takes the podium, and in a quick but painful shot of feedback, addresses the parade.

JUDGE

Citizens! Fellow
citizens! Today is a marked day!

The MAN, at the center of the crowd with his children, cheers in concert with those around him.

JUDGE

As all here know, the history of
this land has always stood for
peace. For justice! The
Enlightened men who gave us this
land, these men, our Fathers, did
so from the sweat and blood of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE (cont'd)
their own hands, to build a greater
land. A free land, in peace!

Again, the crowd erupts. We see a few old men in very old military regalia and hats, raising swords up in the air.

JUDGE
But! As we know. Peace never
lasts long enough. No, it never
does. For our enemies, are enemies
of peace, they are enemies of
freedom, enemies of humanity and
the pervaders of evil itself!

Anger takes over the crowd. The Man's children, among a throng of others, run up to the soldiers guarding the caged men, throwing rocks and spitting at them through the bars. The soldiers push them back after a few gratuitous moments.

JUDGE
BUT! In our history, our long and
exceptional history, never have we
backed down from our enemies! We
have never failed to face its
scourge! First came the enemy of
bondage, many years ago! It nearly
tore our land in half, yet we still
rose above and defeated it! Then
came the Tyrants. They came from
the East and from the West, shock
us they did, but conquer us they
did not! And here, here today, we
have at our feet, the end of the
great Terror! We have won great
citizens! Raising our land
victorious above all others!

The crowd now is raw in emotion, exploding with pride, the distinguished men now stand up, clapping vigorously, shoulder to shoulder with the JUDGE.

JUDGE
And so it shall be! Tonight! On
this glorious evening of victory
over our enemies once
again. Tonight, we shall uphold
the tradition of this land, and in
the Great Hall, all citizens are to
gather and celebrate the Great
Victory Feast!

The crowd is amazed, cheering, hugging, tears of joy.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

INT. THE GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Inside the impeccable great hall, glowing in golden candlelight is row after long row of long tables, draped in cloths of bright white, trimmed in yellow. The citizens are seated in their finest black clothes, in front of them the settings are fine china, silver, crystal, and gold. The Man is sitting with his children, all holding hands as the JUDGE, sitting at the head table, decorated with massively beautiful candelabras, spreading his arms wide, stands to speak.

JUDGE

Let us bow our heads in prayer.

Silence as 1000 people bow in unison, holding hands.

JUDGE

To our creator, our loving, rightful creator, we give thanks, and humbly ask you to continue your protection of our land, and it's citizens, so that we can continue to bid your will. Bless this feast dear creator, and bless all of those who call upon you as our God. Amen.

All lift their heads, and stir a bit in anticipation for what's to come.

JUDGE

And now! THE FEAST!!

The rooms comes to life as a series of butler clad servers enter the hall carrying massive silver platters on their shoulders. In a choreographed way they make rounds to each and every table, delivering the platters, until all are served. As if on cue, each server lifts the lid on the platters and holds them high in the air as a great, deafening applause breaks out in the hall. The citizens pick up their utensils and dig in to the food in an orgy of eating, drinking, and consumption. Napkins tucked neatly into tuxedo shirts are covered in gristle and splattered in the blood and guts of the food as the eating reaches a fever pitch. We're looking up as The JUDGE and his men are slowly cutting small pieces of meat, dipping them in aus juis, then taking small bites in a refined manner.

(CONTINUED)

As we close in on The Man, his face is frozen in horror. Slowly panning back, we see the cooked head of the Vile Man sitting on a platter, garnished in green vegetables. Next to him his children are pulling apart deep fried hands, one of which is missing two fingers, and engorging themselves as if they were eating chicken nuggets.

The Man drops his silverware in a loud clank against the platter, knocks his blood filled glass across the table, breaking it on the floor, silencing the hall. Visibly shaking, looking around the hall in disgust, the Man screams out in horror.

MAN

NOOOO!

All have stopped eating as we see every table, every plate, every glass, is covered with human flesh and blood. It's smeared on their hands, mouths, and clothing as they slowly turn to The Man.

The Man tries to stand up, slips on the blood, and falls down, pulling the table cloth with him. He is hit with cooked body parts as the cloth spills its contents all over him, covering him in blood and gore. As he tries to get up, all those seated around him grab onto him in a fit of anger.

CROWD

...compunction! ...compunction!
compunction...

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The banging of the gavel brings us back to the courtroom.

JUDGE

Order! Order! Has the jury
reached a verdict?

The Jury Foreman slowly stands, paper in hand.

JURY FOREMAN

Yes we have your honor. For the
crime of compunction, we the jury
find the defendant...

CUT TO:

TITLES AGAINST BLACK BACKGROUND

"com-punc-tion - noun 1. A feeling of guilt or moral
scruple that follows the doing of something bad:"

END TITLES