BOLOGNA'S BRIDEGROOM: MEAT AND MURDER IN *SCOTLAND, PA*

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Abstract: Replacing the Middle Ages with the 1970s, and the Scottish royal court with a restaurant in a small, insular American town, the 2001 black comedy *Scotland, PA* explores issues of subjectivity, agency, and exploitation through tropes of food, meat, and "butchery." Director Billy Morrissette's transposition of *Macbeth* to an economically depressed American community highlights the moral, ethical, and social tensions between mass-produced and homemade, consumer and consumed, and a system of brutal instrumentality that reduces living subjects to objectified commodities. Reinventing the play as the tragedy of a deposed, provincial burger king, his rapacious usurpers, and the vegetarian outsider who exposes them, *Scotland, PA* repackages Shakespeare's themes of power and ambition in a form accessible, palatable, and easily consumed in a fast-food nation.

When Lieutenant Ernie McDuff arrives in rural Scotland, Pennsylvania, to investigate the murder of a local restaurant owner, he comes bearing a gift of food. Introducing himself to the victim's family, friends, and as-yet-unexposed killers Pat and Joe "Mac" McBeth at Norm Duncan's funeral, he encourages the assembled mourners to sample his wife's *baba ganouj*. When the offer is met with suspicion—"Your wife's what?"—McDuff explains that his "scary" sounding buffet contribution is a vegetarian dish (*Scotland* 2001).[1] To Mac's vaguely disapproving questions, the detective replies that he, his wife, and their children are all vegetarians: "Oh, yeah, whole family." This exchange leads to a conversation about the food service industry, during which McDuff quips that people "working the grill" should not underestimate what they do: his own "customers" are usually dead before he gets to them, whereas the McBeths "at least . . . have a chance to kill them first . . . with that greasy food." This initial meeting between the film's ruthless (albeit feckless) overreachers and the outsider who brings them down sets the tone for Billy Morrissette's darkly comic 2001 appropriation of *Macbeth*. Replacing the Middle Ages with the 1970s, and the Scottish royal court with a restaurant in a small, insular American town, *Scotland, PA* explores the moral, ethical, and

1 *Scotland, PA*, 2001. All quotations from the film are from this source.

social tensions between the mass-produced and the homemade, the consumer and the consumed, and a culture of commodification that reduces and transforms living subjects to consumable objects in the pursuit of power, socioeconomic status, and personal gratification.

The queasily problematic relationship between the product, its production, and its producers is literally made flesh in the film's depiction of assembly-line hamburgers and nuggets, cardboard buckets of fried chicken, freshly killed and butchered deer, stuffed and mounted hunting trophies, and the corpse of Duncan himself, the deposed burger king who meets his end in a Fry-O-Lator. Indeed, as Eric C. Brown notes, this tasteless execution is arguably "most condemnable for its exaltation of expediency. Duncan becomes part of the cycle of consumption, served quickly and conveniently" (150). The various apparatuses that change living creatures into dispensable commodities — shotguns, knives, cleavers, meat grinders, cutting boards — play a central role in *Scotland, PA*, and many of the town's residents are restaurant employees and/or economically depressed locals who hunt for both recreation and sustenance during the recession of the mid-1970s. Impediments to the McBeths' personal ambitions are eliminated via the same tools they employ in their work and leisure time, and Brown suggests that Morrissette takes a correspondingly utilitarian, carnivorous approach to Shakespeare himself by crediting the playwright as cowriter: "generously inviting Shakespeare to the table . . . only to better dispense with him" (148). But *Scotland PA*'s irreverent repackaging of *Macbeth* cannot disguise a deep engagement with its source material, making the Jacobean tragedy of treachery and murder a provocative lens through which to view postmodern concerns about consumption, opportunism, and exploitation (149).

The film's self-consciously hybrid approach to the play is a key component of its director's guiding vision: Morrissette claims to have conceived the idea for *Scotland, PA* as a high school student, unhappily working a fast-food job while unhappily studying *Macbeth*. A 2002 *New York Times* review quotes him saying, "I never wanted this to be a film for Shakespeare geeks . . . I wanted a midground that didn't shove the Shakespeare in people's faces" (Malanowski 2002). Morrissette goes on to remark that he "basically stole everything [in the screenplay] from *Macbeth* and *Columbo*," a reference to the character played by Peter Falk, a kindly, disingenuously bumbling detective on the 1971–1977 *NBC Mystery Movie* to whom Christopher Walken's mild-mannered Lieutenant McDuff owes a substantial debt (Malanowski 2002). In the DVD commentary, Morrissette remarks that 1970s detective shows were originally "all over the screenplay," and scenes from another series, the patronymically apt *McCloud*, appear twice in *Scotland, PA*: during the opening credits, and later in the local police station, where the town's genuinely bumbling deputy watches television instead of working.

In a further meta/intertextual touch, *Scotland, PA* makes several allusions to Michael Cimino's 1978 war epic, *The Deer Hunter*, which traces the fortunes of three Pennsylvania-bred steelworkers from their hometown through their deployment to and return from Vietnam. The casting of Walken (who had a breakout role in the earlier film) as the avenging McDuff, and the pivotal scene of Mac's annual hunting trip to

Birnam Wood—where the "witches" are disguised as deer and the camouflage-clad men become disoriented, returning home with one dead animal and one dead-drunk hunter—establish multiple temporal, thematic, and aesthetic points of reference between the various "high" and "low" texts at play. In Morrissette's Scotland, the stylized period setting and strategically deployed pop culture motifs of his own film and those of Cimino's (along with television commercials, radio hits, and the *NBC Mystery Movie*) are juxtaposed with *Macbeth* to create something that encompasses and exceeds his stated desire to make "Shakespeare for the kid in the back row . . . getting stoned, reading the CliffsNotes" (Brown 2006, 149).

Scotland, PA opens with a slow dissolve from *McCloud* to the homely facade of Duncan's café, where "Mac" McBeth is nearly as valuable an asset to his employer as is the Thane of Glamis to Shakespeare's Scottish king. Although his noble prototype's deeds of valor are reduced to reliably solid work behind the grill and breaking up food fights between drunken patrons, when he leaps across the counter to "[compel] these skipping kerns to trust their heels," the assembled customers are moved to unanimous applause (*Macbeth*, 1.2.33).[2] Soon after, his loyalty is rewarded with a promotion—which his disgruntled wife considers woefully inadequate—when he outs the assistant manager for stealing from the till. This degree of preferment suits Mac's modest aspirations, which are not to rule Scotland but merely to provide Pat with a higher standard of living than the rusty trailer they call home. The film's witches (three hippies: two clownish men and a more imposing woman they refer to as "our girlfriend") accost Mac in a darkened carnival as he stumbles home from the local bar and proceed to capitalize on his insecurities about bringing home the bacon. Sharing a joint and a bucket of chicken—they remark that the "fair is foul," but "the fowl is fair" while hovering in the cars of a Ferris wheel—the weird trio speculates about Pat's waning affection. "Failure's kind of cute in your twenties; not so cute in your thirties, is it Mac? Don't you deserve better? Doesn't *she* deserve better?" they demand, before offering a glimpse of the future: a drive-through window.

Marguerite Rippy points to the film's "suggestion that British primogeniture survives intact in American capitalism" as applied to "characters . . . familiar to survivors of small-town America: ambitious parents with wayward, slacker children; closeted high-school thespians; unsophisticated yet loyal friends." But while the film's most obvious joke hinges on its dislocation of a signifier of "high" culture (Shakespearean tragedy) to a putatively incongruous setting (an American fast-food restaurant), the tensions in *Scotland, PA* are not confined to social class. The McBeths' troubles are rooted in doubts about their self-worth, their right to be happy, and their ability to succeed, even by the relatively low standards of their surroundings. These anxieties are succinctly expressed in Pat's justification for Duncan's murder: "We're not bad people, Mac . . . we're just underachievers who have to make up for lost time." Courtney Lehmann writes that Morrissette's vision of *Macbeth* as "a literal tragedy of appetite . . . draws us into the void of unfulfilled desire that lends meaning to the McBeths' loser lifestyle, only to render us complicit in the formation of their super-sized drive for forbidden, deep-fried *jouissance*" (245). But compared with the vaunting ambition of

2 All quotations from *Macbeth* are from Shakespeare n.d., henceforth cited in-text by act, scene, and line.

Shakespeare's characters, the "loser" McBeths' frustrations and the futility of their efforts carry a far greater degree of pathos; having failed to get ahead by fair means, the couple sees no choice but to resort to foul ones. Following Duncan's murder, his apathetic sons, Malcolm and Donald, inherit "a shitload" of money, but see no value in it except as a means to escape the lifestyle their father bequeaths them, and practically give the family business away to his killers. The McBeths are keenly aware of the need to "make up for lost time" and fight desperately for everything they get—from a minor promotion to their short-lived tenure in a split-level house filled with Mac's hunting trophies—but their slice of the American dream still eludes them.

The semiotics of national and cultural identity are intimately linked to *Scotland PA*'s portrayal of small-town America in an era of growing corporatization, and with "the Shakespearean script remaining at the level of textual allusion, verbal patterning, and suggestive imagery," the film is free to explore the play's issues of power, agency, and moral responsibility by refracting its own, irony-privileging historical moment through the lens of the recent past (Burnett 2007, 58). The preponderance of names beginning with "Mc" or "Mac" signals the inheritance-based, pre-American world's intrusion into the new one of supposedly limitless opportunity achieved through hard work and ambition, and the film's shooting location of Nova Scotia (the "New Scotland" settled by nineteenth century immigrants) underscores *Scotland PA*'s connection to its European roots. Carolyn Jess-Cooke notes how these elements "re-configure Scottishness as a somewhat quaint ideal of localization through which a post-colonial imperative can be articulated"; in doing so, Morrissette

> "imaginatively switches the play's location to its colonial 'sequel'. . . [and] reinvents the subject of the drama as a geographical site that is, as the film's title suggests, not Shakespeare's original bastion. Scotland, Pennsylvania, is pointedly the 'sequel' to Scotland, UK, a move that points up a cultural identity that is structured around sequelisation and 'afterwardness'" (174–75).

Consequently—in its relocation of an English playwright's work to a former English colony to reimagine and repackage a Scottish king's deposition and murder—*Scotland*, *PA* effectively jumps the Atlantic Ocean and several of the lives to come.

Getting into Bad Company

In visual terms, a proliferation of plaid—flannel shirts, sport coats, polyester trousers, curtains, upholstery, and even the oven mitt concealing Pat McBeth's "damn'd spot" all sport tartan patterns—gestures toward the Shakespearean source material while satirizing the oft-maligned aesthetics of the 1970s. The movie's soundtrack, composed largely of songs by Bad Company, comments obliquely on the principal characters' moral treachery and signals the PBR-swilling, pot-smoking sociocultural milieu the director and his screenplay construct for them. It is also worth noting that Bad Company was a British "super-group"

formed in 1973, while the film's most upbeat sequence—a montage of the McBeths' social ascent, complete with a glitzy restaurant makeover, split-level home with waterbed, shiny new Camaro, and in-ground pool where Pat floats with a tropical cocktail—is accompanied by English one-hit wonder First Class' "Beach Baby," cowritten by the fortuitously named Gill Shakespeare. We do hear some contemporary American music: a jukebox briefly plays Jessi Colter's maudlin country ballad "I'm Not Lisa" before Mac rejects it for Bad Company's eponymous number one hit; Norm Duncan's depressed son Donald listens to Janis Ian's "At Seventeen" (also discarded in favor of Bad Company, by his rebellious older brother); and Marshall Tucker Band's "Can't You See" plays over the closing credits. But this music is presented as less "cool" than the British rock preferred by the film's protagonists.

At the same time, the omnipresent stars-and-stripes and the slick, impersonal atmosphere of the McBeths' refurbished restaurant (the only social space we see other than the decidedly down-market Witch's Brew Tavern), point towards what Mark Burnett terms "corporate globalization's inseparability from Americanization . . . as . . . the film charts a movement away from Duncan's benevolent patriarchy and home-cut chips and towards a nutritionally empty landscape of corruption, jingoism, and exploitation" (59). The mass-produced, quickly consumed food served at the McBeths' brash remodeling of Norm Duncan's family operation figures the social and ethical void at the heart of the town's culture, which Pat and Mac manipulate and prey upon. In contrast to Duncan's modest but homey diner, Pat and Mac's bright, efficient establishment serves a standardized, homogenous product to a steady stream of customers, many of whom use its revolutionary intercom and drive-through window because they "don't even feel like getting out of the car." Moreover, Pat's persistent inability to remember her employees' names indicates that the impersonal aesthetic of the McBeths' food service extends to all aspects of their business: if the best "sauce to meat is ceremony," then the meals and meetings that occur in this Scotland are indeed "bare without it" (*Macbeth* 3.4.40–41).

Lauren Shohet has observed how the addition of "Mc" to anything "telegraphs how consumer culture replaces the patronymic prefix with a branding prefix," and Lieutenant McDuff seems to recognize the fundamental emptiness behind the McBeths' bright, cheerful façade almost immediately (192). From his first waggish comment on the disparity between actual nourishment and the greasy food with which the McBeths and their coworkers "kill" their customers, the detective's outward admiration for Pat and Mac's energy and ambition seems tempered with skepticism. Although McDuff does not yet know the extent of it, the couple's approach to what he considers the noble work of "feeding hungry people" is built on dehumanization: to acquire Duncan's restaurant, the McBeths first strip their employer of agency by binding and gagging him, and then of subjectivity by reducing him to an object—"one big ugly french fry"—of use and predation. The meddling, apparently foolish crime-fighter who stumbles on the truth is a standard trope of 1970s crime drama, and (in another callback to *Columbo*) McDuff adopts this pose to ingratiate himself and elicit candor from his quarry, employing different tactics with the two McBeths. In his interactions with Pat, the detective has a flustered, slightly flirtatious naïveté that leads her to view him as less

threatening and more easily distracted than he is, while simultaneously enjoying his flattering attentions. (When she asks about his family, he stammers, "two wives and a son," before correcting himself, to which she replies, "Well, I suppose the other would be convenient.") With the wary and mistrustful Mac—who treats McDuff with barely concealed contempt, invariably pronouncing "lieutenant" with a sneer—McDuff plays the role of interested visitor, presenting his curiosity about the business, its employees, and their place in the community as respect for the restaurant industry in general and the McBeths' ambitious vision in particular.

By positioning himself as a quasi-customer or "guest," McDuff uses his outsider position to inveigle his way inside the McBeths' workplace and (later) home, happily accepting Pat's offer of a free ice-cream cone and the "thrill" of shouting "pick up!" while wearing a fry-cook's paper hat. At the same time, Pat's ostensible welcome of the detective into her kitchen, where she gives him food and drink he considers "poisonous," evokes Lady Macbeth's dispensing of wine, wassail, banquets, and drugged possets. The irony of the new establishment's sign, which reads, "Pat & 'Mac' McBeth: your hosts," further aligns the couple with their Shakespearean analogues via their perversion of hospitality. Macbeth betrays his royal visitor in his capacity as Duncan's "kinsman and his subject" but also as "his host, / Who should against his murderer shut the door, / Not bear the knife myself" (*Macbeth* 1.7.13–16).

Scotland, PA parlays this dynamic into Pat and Mac's abuse of their employer's trust and confidence: soon after the murder, Duncan's eldest son Malcolm sells them the business, and notes that if he had shared the McBeths' interest in his work, his father "would have died a happier man." And in a self-serving echo of Lady Macbeth's comment after setting out the daggers—"Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done 't" (*Macbeth* 2.2.12–13)—Pat brazenly declares at Duncan's funeral that he was "like a father to me." Like Shakespeare's scheming couple, the McBeths pursue their desires without regard to the rights, interests, or feelings of those in their way, and are driven further from their own humanity the more deeply entrenched they become in covering up their crime. The warm welcome Pat and Mac offer customers, like the euphemistically named products they dispense, masks the violence on which their business is founded. Just as the restaurant's anodyne makeover conceals the inhumane means by which Pat and Mac acquired it, their cheerfully packaged burgers and nuggets occlude the brutal processes that turn them from living animals to "Big McBeths."

Sick From Food

In addition to its interest in bodies as disposable, saleable, and consumable foodstuffs, *Scotland, PA* is concerned with bodies as sites of sickness and corruption. In *Macbeth*, this theme emerges via the equation of Macbeth's distressed body politic with physical malaise; as James Keller writes, "the violation perpetrated by the hero produces universal suffering . . . portrayed . . . as a diseased or sterile land. To reveal the broad ramifications of Macbeth's crime, Shakespeare utilizes the language of suffering and disease, personifying

Scotland as an ailing patient who requires medical attention and whose condition is lamentable" (39). "Bleed, bleed, poor country!" cries the exiled Macduff on hearing news of Macbeth's tyranny, while Malcolm bemoans how Scotland "sinks beneath the yoke. / It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds" (*Macbeth* 4.3.39, 48–51). Ross arrives in England with "the newest grief" for the Scots nobles, describing their abused homeland as "our grave . . . / Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air / Are made, not marked," a place where "good men's lives / Expire before the flowers in their caps, / Dying or ere they sicken" (*Macbeth* 4.3.191, 193–94. 196–98).

The leitmotif of an unjustly ruled nation as sickly, wounded, and infertile extends to the childlessness that exacerbates Macbeth's desperation and leads him to commit ever-greater atrocities. These crimes culminate in the slaughter of Macduff's family, which the latter laments he cannot properly avenge because Macbeth "has no children" (*Macbeth* 4.3.255). In Shakespeare's play, Macbeth's sterile, unproductive sovereignty is juxtaposed with the rule of Edward the Confessor, a king who not only restores health to his own subjects, but whose invading forces bring about the usurper's downfall and reinstate order in the shape of Duncan's legitimate heir. An English doctor tells the Scottish nobles how "a crew of wretched souls" are cured by Edward's touch, "Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand," and Malcolm confirms that "strangely visited people / All swoll'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye, / The mere despair of surgery, he cures" (*Macbeth* 4.3.161, 164; 172–74). Moreover, this remedial gift is hereditary—"To the succeeding royalty he leaves / The healing benediction"—while Macbeth has only "a fruitless crown" and "a barren scepter" (4.3.177–78; 3.1.65–66). That Shakespeare elides Edward's own childlessness is intriguing here, given that the latter's lack of heirs led to England's conquest by the Normans in1066, and James I's own accession to the English throne was effectively an inversion of the invasion depicted in *Macbeth*. There is also the matter of Malcolm's "testing" of Macduff in 4.3, which raises troubling questions about the heir's suitability to rule (echoed in *Scotland, PA* when McDuff encourages Malcolm to "have a conversation that makes you not guilty" while discussing his "sucky relationship" with Duncan). It is also worth noting that James himself wished to abolish what he found the distasteful and superstitious practice of the "royal touch" on both personal and Protestant grounds, but he capitulated in the face of public demand.

Scotland, PA addresses the conceptual intersection between physical and municipal well-being in corporeal terms, through depictions of substance abuse, social immobility, and depression, along with more overtly violent injuries. Pat and Mac enjoy a voraciously carnal relationship but, like their Shakespearean counterparts, have no children. The only children in *Scotland, PA* are the (equally bronzed) son of the tanning salon proprietor and the local mechanic's children, who are twice referred to as "little fuckers." Lieutenant McDuff's wife and sons are mentioned but—unlike their analogues in Macbeth—never seen. Jess-Cooke points to the presence of Birnam Wood as both hunting ground and "fashion motif, captured by the pattern of black, leafless trees that adorns Pat's outfit" in the banquet/press conference scene; an evocation of barrenness suggesting that Mac is "vanquished by the *representation* of that territory, embodied (or adorned) by his wife" (176, original emphasis). Hot sex life notwithstanding, Pat is frustrated by

what she sees as Mac's indolence, and the two argue frequently, especially when impaired by drugs and alcohol. Mac's best friend, Anthony "Banko" Banconi, is often so drunk that he must sleep in his truck, and (perhaps unsurprisingly, given the film's 1970s setting) everyone but the proto-New Age McDuff and his childlike deputy, Ed, smokes cigarettes. When Mac meets the witches—who offer him some "wacky tobacky"—he is by his own admission "pretty fucked up," and forgets the whole encounter until Duncan's plans for a pick-up window trigger his memory; his subsequent failure to share this prior knowledge with Pat, his "dearest partner of greatness," signals the growing distance in their relationship (*Macbeth* 1.5.11). There is also plenty of emotional dis-ease in evidence: Duncan's son and heir is an angry would-be rock star forced to work for a father and a family business he claims to hate, his younger son Donald is a morose, closeted homosexual, and Duncan himself, having "borne his faculties so meek" and been "so clear in his great office," is so exhausted from overwork that he spends a good deal of time napping there (*Macbeth* 1.7.17–18).

Nor is Scotland's economic health very robust: the embittered, underpaid restaurant staff is shown stealing supplies and eating from customers' discarded plates, and the initial murder suspect is a homeless alcoholic reduced to sleeping behind the local garage (upon hearing of his arrest, Pat declares, "That's why I never give money to those people"). Lehmann remarks that the film's location "seems to inscribe the social pathology of 'going nowhere' in the non-descript topography of the land itself," and aside from Duncan's tidy bungalow, the town overflows with rusted muscle cars, down-at-heel businesses, trailer parks, and roadkill (245).

The theme of ill health is enacted in more conventionally "medical" ways as well: on the night of Duncan's murder, Mac tricks a nurse (who has abandoned her hospital shift to attend a party) into diagnosing him with a fever, using this as an excuse to leave the bar and catch the boss alone. Pat harasses the local pharmacist for increasing quantities of ointment to soothe a now healed burn on her hand. This "damn'd spot"—the result of splattering Fry-O-Lator oil during the murder—and its lingering, imaginary pain and blistering connects Pat with the grisly manner of Duncan's death, but also with the greasy, meaty offerings that she and Mac produce and profit from after appropriating the crime scene. Like Lady Macbeth, Pat has "a mind diseased" for which there is no "sweet oblivious antidote" (*Macbeth* 5.3.50, 54), while Mac's emotional withdrawal, heavy drinking, and one-sided telephone conversations with the witches look like encroaching madness. As their fear of exposure intensifies, both McBeths lack sleep, "Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, / Chief nourisher in life's feast," and treat their insomnia with alcohol and Valium. Their marriage becomes another casualty of their unscrupulous ambition (*Macbeth* 2.2.51–52).

As the McBeths succumb to the pressures of guilt and anxiety, *Scotland PA*'s McDuff and Banko—like their theatrical analogues—are interested parties who remain morally outside the system of brutal instrumentality that informs and enables the couple's rise to power. In life, Banko is a flannel-clad stoner, a buffoonish sidekick who operates the restaurant's traveling French fry truck. Alluding to what Jess-Cooke

terms "the 'unnutritional' and, indeed, fatal quality of the fast-food industry as an establishment based on addictive repetition," McDuff compares this marketing tactic to narcotics dealing: "That's right, get 'em hooked, like the kids on drugs. It's wonderful!" (163). The McBeths consider Banko harmless until two separate evocations of the iconic Prince spaghetti commercial—in which a mother repeatedly calls, "Anthony!"—suggest that Banko is "a problem," and once dispatched by Mac's shotgun, the formerly inarticulate meathead changes from victimized object to vengeful subject. In his blood-soaked overalls, he appears at the restaurant's grand opening to torment his murderer, asking, "Why did you kill me?" in sober, reasonable tones until Mac is unable to "give the cheer" in what should be his moment of triumph (*Macbeth* 3.4.37). Excluded from the drive-through prophecy, Banko has been unaware of the witches' "great prediction / Of noble having and of royal hope," and only realizes how foully Mac has played for his newfound status and prosperity after he becomes a by-product of it (*Macbeth* 1.3.58–59).

While the McBeths may have thrown Scotland into a state of moral and ethical chaos, there is another world beyond the town limits, and Morrissette invests healing potential in a foreign antagonist, conflating Edward the Confessor's restorative touch with Macduff's unique capacity to defeat Scotland's "hell-hound," in the mild-mannered figure of Ernie McDuff (*Macbeth* 5.10.4). Like his Shakespearean namesake, McDuff's designated role as agent of justice makes him the moral arbiter of the piece, exposing and subverting the McBeths' usurpation. Meanwhile, his outsider status—arriving from an unnamed city in a foreign car, bearing strange, meatless food, and investigating the natives' secrets—renders his function within the community both disruptive and recuperative, simultaneously threatening the status quo and offering the reinstatement of order. The problematic implications of mass-produced, unhealthy food dispensed through a window in disposable containers, with its implicit disregard for social bonds, public welfare, and the environment, are further emphasized by the detective's acquisition of the restaurant after the McBeths' fall from grace. In his attempt to reinvent the site of Duncan's murder as "The Home of the Garden Burger," McDuff seeks to restore the business and the town to a prelapsarian state where home-cooked food, made from healthy ingredients, is served by a caring proprietor.

But McDuff fails to "fit" in Scotland, despite his good intentions, because he seems to come not only from a different place, but a different time. The impersonal drive-through is part of "the future" that the witches offer Mac, but that future also includes a growing mistrust of corporate values, and the appearance of "New Age" principles like those embraced by the detective, who abstains from eating animals and listens to vaguely "Eastern" self-help cassettes (including *Macbeth* pastiches declaring "I must not toil in my troubles," and "Tomorrow is tomorrow; Tomorrow is not today . . . *Ommm*").

In another nod to *Columbo*, the detective's odd manner—particularly as embodied by Walken's idiosyncratic acting style—makes him an object of fascination and suspicion. McDuff repeatedly expresses admiration for the McBeths' overhaul of Duncan's establishment, if not for their product, but Mac meets this apparently cordial interest with distrust. He even asks Ed, the ineffectual local deputy, if he does not find

McDuff "a little pushy, always pushing people around . . . going around in that little German car, always avoiding meat?" (In the world of *Scotland, PA* anything but a Camaro or pickup truck is outlandish, but the car in question is a Datsun; the fact that Mac cannot tell the difference emphasizes his limited frame of reference.) McDuff's refusal of meat constitutes a rejection of Scotland's way of life, and what Mac reads as censure is analogous to the Thane of Fife's "failed . . . presence at the tyrant's feast" despite Macbeth's "great bidding" (*Macbeth* 3.6.24–25; 3.4.160). Indeed, Macduff's dry wish that Ross "may . . . see things well done" (2.4.52) at the usurper's investiture resonates uncomfortably given the manner of Norm Duncan's death, while Pat's paraphrasing of Lady Macbeth after the murder—"Mac, it's done; it can't be undone" (*Macbeth* 3.2.14)—evokes their customers' specifications as to how they want their burgers cooked.

'Tis Said They Eat Each Other

Mac is McDuff's opposite number not only because he consumes and sells flesh, but also because he hunts it, and *Scotland, PA* plays on language used in *Macbeth* to construct the ironic spectacle of the murderous meat eater pursued by a peaceful herbivore. The play contains numerous allusions to birds (wrens, ravens, martlets, owls, and falcons are all mentioned [*Macbeth* 4.2.11; 1.5.45; 1.6.5; 2.2.3; 2.2.20; 2.4.16; 4.2.13; 2.4.12]), and Shakespeare applies several avian metaphors to his protagonist's predatory nature, most strikingly when Macduff likens his family's killer to a hawk, and his wife and children to a hen and chicks: "O hell-kite! All? / What, all my pretty chickens and their dam / At one fell swoop?" (4.3.256–8). These terms are given culinary analogies in *Scotland, PA*: in addition to the "fair fowl" consumed by the witches and the stuffed birds on Mac's walls, his first menu suggestion to Duncan is "little chicken pieces with dipping sauce." His own restaurant's signature offerings are the "Chicken McBeth" and the "Little Chicken McBeth," and Keller observes how Macbeth's characterization as a raptor and Mac's love of hunting encapsulate "the carnivore/herbivore dialectic found in the standoff between Morrissette's McBeth and McDuff. Chickens are herbivores largely consuming grains, while hawks and owls feed upon flesh" (42). When McDuff visits the McBeths' taxidermy-filled den after Banko's murder, Mac mocks what he imagines to be McDuff's judgmental attitude: "Let me guess: you are gracing our humble little home with a vegetable tidbit to show us how the other half lives . . . I meant better half." When McDuff protests that he doesn't consider himself superior, his host sneers, "No . . . because that would be *mean*. And you don't think mean thoughts, just us vicious carnivores," before offering to make a martini "because that has a vegetable in it."

McDuff's vegetarianism combines with his mild manner to complicate and challenge established markers of sexual and gender identity in ways that Scotland finds confusing and ambiguous. While the town resolutely ignores Donald's homosexuality—"Of course he likes football; all young men like football!" Duncan protests when Malcolm suggests his brother wants to quit the team—the spectacle of a man eschewing animal flesh elicits discomfort. Keller (2006) comments on the "respective culinary practices of the two principal protagonists . . . the particular behaviors associated with carnivores and herbivores," and how the

film's "McDuff is the more cultivated male with a sensitivity uncharacteristic of the masculinity performed by McBeth and his friends" (45). Indeed, when the spray-tanned, philandering Kevin McKane (owner of the local salon, When A Tan Loves A Woman) hugs McDuff for agreeing not to reveal that his alibi involves a woman other than his wife, the restaurant patrons and employees who observe the encounter proceed to embrace him after their own interviews, assuming the practice is "standard procedure" wherever McDuff comes from.

McDuff's comparative success—professional job, middle-class lifestyle, children—in combination with his "unmanly" dietary and vehicular proclivities also plays into Mac's insecurities about his own role as man of the house. These anxieties have already been exposed by the witches, who berate Mac for his poor performance as breadwinner while modeling an unconventional relationship featuring two foolish men and an assertive female. In the scene where Duncan has the McBeths role-play a scenario with a wife "too tired to cook" after a long day, Pat automatically takes the "driver" position of two chairs placed side by side, while Mac opts for the "passenger" seat. Even when the gist of the game becomes apparent (Duncan: "you aren't going to let your poor exhausted wife drive home after such a hard day, are you?"), it takes the pair a minute to catch on and assume their "proper" places, making it clear who drives the family Camaro. Lehmann notes that Pat is "the brains of the operation but, like other women in the 1970s who were contemplating autonomy for the first time, she still requires a man to execute—and, consequently, profit from—her plans" (246).

The role-playing episode provokes Pat to suggest they kill the boss, make it look like a botched robbery, and take over the business: a pivotal conversation that takes place in the car, with Pat behind the wheel. Like his Shakespearean model, Mac brings his masculine agency to bear successfully in situations requiring violence—killing and dismembering animals he wants to eat, sell, or exhibit; murdering people who threaten to expose his crimes—but his tactics are less effective in domestic and social settings that privilege intelligence, strategy, and finesse over brute force. Without his "fiend-like queen" to plan and call the shots, Mac is merely a "butcher" (*Macbeth* 5.8.82).

In fact, when Mac does take charge, the results are terrifying; on his director's commentary, Morrissette notes that he saw "the impact of Mac saying 'I'm going to take care of you' as being Pat's . . . worst nightmare, because she had always taken care of everything . . . what I was trying to convey was that the reason she finally goes over the top is because she realizes she is no longer in control at all" (2005). Lehmann writes that "not even [Pat] could have anticipated the Loch Ness monster that McBeth becomes, roving and ravaging the open spaces that now seem too small to contain his appetites," and the antisocial, premodern savagery of Mac's approach is invoked before *Scotland, PA*'s final confrontation, where the film's twin themes of meat and mastery reach their apotheosis (246).

Morrissette's original intention was to stage Macbeth's slaughter of Macduff's family by having Mac kidnap the detective's children, tie them up in the restaurant, and force them to eat meat, but he feared audiences would find it too disturbing in a comedy and opted to have Mac take the childlike Ed hostage and force-feed McDuff instead. The witches summon Mac to plot McDuff's downfall, a task they declare makes them hungry enough to eat (respectively) a horse, a cow, and a pig. The first witch's suggestion that Mac "kill McDuff's entire family" meets with scorn: it might have worked "about a thousand years ago," but "these are modern times. You can't go around killing everybody!" The female witch asks, "Can you?" and suggests subterfuge instead. Mac lures the detective to the restaurant's roof, where he asks "Hungry, lieutenant?" and attempts to choke his guest with a cheeseburger. Rather than swallow Mac's brutal offering, McDuff bites the hand that feeds him, drawing blood, a momentarily carnivorous impulse that ends with Mac impaled on the steer horns accessorizing his car. In his last moments, the witches reappear to jeer as he goes from businessman to "the show and gaze o' the time . . . as our rarer monsters are," publicly exposed to the community he has deceived and abused (*Macbeth* 5.8.28–29).

As her husband dies on the horns of the cattle whose flesh he trades in, Pat removes her offending hand with a meat cleaver, chosen from several drawers filled with knives and other implements of dismemberment. The camera pans upward from her hand (encased in a tartan oven-mitt) on the cutting board, and as the cleaver comes down the tension drains from her face and she breaks into a beatific smile of relief for a "heart . . . sorely charged" (*Macbeth* 5.1.56) before collapsing. The film's penultimate scene alternates between shots of Pat's corpse on her kitchen floor and Mac's atop his car as the sun rises and Duncan's sons "behold . . . / Th'usurper's cursèd head" (*Macbeth* 5.8.65–66). But although the villains are dead, and the presence of several police cars implies the restoration of law and order, there is no corresponding sense that "the time is free" in Scotland (*Macbeth* 5.8.66). As Mac tells McDuff in their final meeting, "I hate to break it you, lieutenant, but this is not an episode of *Columbo*. I'm not gonna break down, hand you the gun, and then get waltzed outta here between a couple of good-looking cops with my head bowed down." Burnett suggests that "the final montage of McDuff chomping on a cigar-like carrot outside his new organic vegetarian restaurant completes his triumph over the McBeths and incarnates a new regime," but the film's closing shot belies such an optimistic reading (59).

Our last sight of McDuff, standing with his dog outside a restaurant devoid of customers/consumers suggests that his chosen community is unmoved by his Edenic vision, and that their appetites remain predatory, carnivorous, and focused on convenience. As a crowning 1970s touch, a streaker runs by waving a miniature American flag, but fails to stop for a "gardenburger." In terms of the film's narrative arc and cultural ethos, McDuff calls Scotland's way of life into question, but while his outsider perspective allows him to critique and interrogate it, he cannot effect substantive change.

The perplexing difficulty of McDuff's situation exemplifies the aporia at the heart of both *Scotland, PA* and its Shakespearean source. In *Macbeth*, the Scottish nobility—with the aid of English troops—defeat

the tyrant and liberate their beleaguered nation. But Shakespeare's audience, adjusting to the rule of a foreign, Scottish king, knew that the unity suggested by the play's ending (and by James Stuart's "Great Britain") was at best illusory, and that suspicion and antagonism were far from banished between the newly joined kingdoms. Perhaps *Macbeth* is so difficult to stage effectively—yet lends itself so well to appropriation and adaptation—because we know its putative resolution is ultimately specious. The (good) Scots want their sovereignty restored, and to wash away the blood, conflict, and heartbreak of the past, but history—as events in our own time continue to demonstrate—shows the deeply vexed nature of that dream. In *Scotland, PA*, Lieutenant McDuff solves the crime, but the wholesomeness and purity he hopes to bring to the community is an equally doomed proposition. Just as the violence of warfare informs the culture of Shakespeare's Scotland, the butchery and consumption of animals is the inescapable norm in Morrissette's. The spectacle of a vegetarian opening a restaurant in a meat-loving town becomes a comic metaphor for Scotland's postlapsarian state, especially viewed through the lens of burgeoning twenty-first-century concerns about animal welfare. Like Adam and Eve, innocent vegetarians before original sin, the people of post-McBeths Scotland have fallen, and they cannot—or will not—get up. By transporting *Macbeth*'s brutally drawn themes of power, exploitation, and objectification from the royal court to the food court, *Scotland PA*'s carnivorous tropes cut to the meaty heart of Shakespeare's play: a formal repackaging both appealing and digestible to a fast-food nation.

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