THE CLEAN UP CREW
By Darren J Seeley
FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL. ROOM 445 - NIGHT

The door opens; light from the hallway pours in. Wearing painter's overalls, GUS (30's) and RICK (early 20's) look inside.

Gus pushes a mop and bucket with him, Rick with a crossword puzzles magazine stuffed in his pants pocket.

They are joined by CASSIE,(mid 20s). Dressed like her male counterparts, she's the only one of the three wearing a painter's hat and safety goggles. She doesn't carry anything but a clipboard and ball point pen.

CASSIE
God said, let there be light.

With the flick of a switch, the light reveals nothing out of place.

RICK
One of these days, we should see what room four-four-four and four-four-six look like.

GUS
No one's died in either one of them.

RICK
Not yet.

Gus and Rick stop at the closed bathroom door..

GUS
(takes out a quarter)
Flip you for it.

RICK
Heads.

Gus flips the coin. Before it lands on his wrist and he can uncover the result, Cassie opens the door to the bathroom, goes inside.
INT. BATHROOM.

The light turns on by itself.

The entire room is a four color scheme: pale white, chalk white, light grey and deep black.

His back to Cassie, SAM (late 30's) is dressed like a cheap private eye from the 1940's.

He stands in a stream of dark crimson, in front of the blood filled tub. He hears Cassie enter, but doesn't turn around to look her in the face.

SAM
News travels fast.

CASSIE
We got here as soon as we could.

SAM
Hotel’s policies, I swear to God. Someone stubs a toe, you give them free breakfast.

Sam lights a cigarette. Wiggles out his match. Cassie catches a brief glimpse of a scar on his wrist.

SAM
Fella loses a toe, you make sure there’s no blood on the carpet before the heat shows up with the papers.

Sam takes a long drag off the cigarette.

SAM
This one lost his head.
(pause)
What are you doing in here anyway?

CASSIE
Just doing my job.

SAM
They don’t pay you enough. Rick and Gus, I expected one of them. Not a woman.
CASSIE
(light sass)
Sorry to disappoint. There's no smoking -

SAM
Things will kill you. Yeah, yeah. Heard it before. Put your best foot forward please.

She shrugs, comes closer. She gets a better look at the dead body in the tub. She discovers Sam was right about the corpse. She puts her hand over her mouth.

SAM
Rick and Gus should have filled you in on a few things. Like when they told you about me. But you're better than them right? Got something to prove, and even though they respect you, you treat them like a pair of fools.

Cassie casually lifts up the toilet seat with her spare hand, catches her breath.

SAM
Flush when you're done.

CASSIE
(nervous)
I'm alright.

She isn't. Her knees buckle on the turn to the right, her dinner drops down into the stool.

SAM
Stinks worse than the stiff. I'd like to tell you now that there's good news and there's bad news, but sadly, it's all bad.

She looks up to him. Standing over her is a half decomposed zombie-ish like man, and he's dressed like Sam. He is.
INT. HOTEL. ROOM 445 - MOMENTS LATER

Cassie screams, rushes out of the bathroom and rams right into Gus, who catches her.

CASSIE
Oh my God!

From the main room, Sam looks like a normal looking man in his late 30's. Sam watches the trio as he stays in the bathroom. He never leaves the confines of that space.

SAM
Hey, she going to be okay?

RICK
We told her the room was haunted, but she's our new supervisor, transferred from the day shift.

SAM
New supervisor? She's in charge over you guys?

RICK
Yeah. We told her, a two man job is fine, she wouldn't listen.

SAM
Well, it don't shock me in the least. You and Gus have your moments, but it's obvious you guys ain't doing something right.

RICK
Hey...

SAM
You two have been in this room more than the stiffness. You and Gus should have told her about me.

GUS
We did.
SAM
Well she sure as hell wasn't asking for my autograph. What's her name?

RICK
Cassandra. Everyone calls her Cassie.

SAM
Cassie.
(pause)
Listen, Cassie. I...dammit, Gus. Turn her around.

CASSIE
I'm not looking at him!

GUS
As long as we are out here, from in there, he looks like anyone else.

RICK
He's not going to hurt you.

CASSIE
There's a dead body in there!

SAM
And he ain't gonna hurt you either.

GUS
You'll have to give us a minute.

SAM
She can't leave.

GUS
I know.

CASSIE
What's that supposed to mean?

RICK
Means what it means. It's part of the rules.
CASSIE
A dead body without a head is in the bathtub! And a ghoul zombie standing in the same room!

SAM
Zombie? Ghoul? Listen, you dumb broad, I'm a phantom, dead for half a century or so, but I don't eat human flesh and I sure as hell don't rip people's heads off.
(to Rick)
This ain't gonna take all night, is it?

Sam walks up to the bathroom door, slowly closes it.

SAM
(from behind the door)
Better hurry. Remember the last time the clock ran out.

MINUTES LATER

A tearful eyed Cassie seated on the bed. Gus next to her.

A pencil rested behind his right ear, Rick relaxes in a nearby recliner, with a magazine dedicated to crossword puzzles in his hands.

CASSIE
So let me get this right. The rules. First person in the bathroom and talks to Sam has the be the one to clean up the blood on the floor and drain the blood in the tub without assistance.

GUS
Yes. In the bathroom, Sam looks like something out of Dawn Of The Dead, but from out here, he looks normal.
CASSIE
He mentioned a time limit?

RICK
Yes. We just missed it once. Once was enough.

CASSIE
So what happened?

Rick is about to answer the question. He changes his mind, and goes back to the crossword puzzles.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Cassie's hands squeeze out the mop, blood and soapy water drain in the bucket.

Seated on the toilet, Sam, posed like The Thinker only with a lit cigarette in his hand, observes.

SAM
It's not the kind of thing you talk about.

CASSIE
Did it really happen?

SAM
Time is of the essence. You have less than two minutes.

CASSIE
I'm sorry. I looked at the books, I thought Gus and Rick were screwing around on the job. Who would make up a story like that?

SAM
You're doing good. Now to pop your cherry.

CASSIE
What did you just say?

Sam laughs. She can't stand to glance back to him.
CASSIE
Least you can do is put a towel over your face or something.

She goes to the tub, kneels down. Turns away her head as her elbows go into the tub of thick blood and beside one headless corpse.

SAM
If it makes you feel better, I think they were screwing around. I give out the do's and the don't's. Gus gets a little nausea, his world gets turned upside down for a few hours. He got lucky, caught a break. He's an alright guy, don't get me wrong, but I'm just saying, you know, I can't have crazy mistakes like that. It's a huge pain. You know?

CASSIE
Bet they didn't have to drain the tub.

SAM
Yes they both had their turn. Even cross word puzzle man Rick. You know he actually asked me what's a eight letter word for reflecting light that starts with an 'r'? In the middle of cleaning up this mess. The nerve.

CASSIE
Well, it's going down. I don't...think I should have done this. The police...

SAM
What part of this don't you understand? Even if Gus and Rick took turns cleaning the mess, what do they do with the dead bodies?
CASSIE
I'm not going to have to...

SAM
Hell, no! Sweet mother of mercy! I'm not a sadist, woman! "Drag the body out". Did I say anything about taking the body out of the tub?

CASSIE
No.

SAM
Do you want to?

CASSIE
No. Not really.

SAM
Glad to hear it. Now, you're doing good. Now, when that tub is completely drained, take the mop and bucket out. Not one drop of blood should remain in the room.

CASSIE
Who is he?

SAM
Who do you think he is?

Now she looks back to him.

CASSIE
Can I go now?

SAM
I'm sure it's okay.

Cassie pushes the mop and bucket out of the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL. ROOM 445 - CONTINUOUS

....and she hands them over to Gus.
CASSIE
Wipe that smirk off your face.

GUS
I'm not smiling.

CASSIE
Deep down inside you are.

Rick rolls up his unfinished crossword puzzle magazine, stuffs it in his back pocket.

RICK
You get it all?

CASSIE
Yes. I got it all.
(looks down at bucket)
Wait. If he's a ghost and the guy without the head is a ghost, then this blood should disappear by the time we leave the room if not shortly after, right?

RICK
Uh, no. The blood kind of seeps through a time line or other dimension or something like...

CASSIE
Speak English.

GUS
Think of it like red ectoplasm.

RICK
Red goo.

CASSIE
So it comes out of the clothes, shoes?

From inside the bathroom: an otherwise silent Sam checks his shoes.

GUS
Of course. Now are you absolutely sure you got it all?
CASSIE
Yes. I just said I did.

GUS
Even I missed a drop or two.

From inside the bathroom: Sam inspects his left shoe more closely. He has a bad thought, He glances to the tub.

Cassie's hand reaches for the door knob.

CASSIE
So what? We travel back in time to when the murder happened? Go to hell? Go to the moon, what?

GUS
Well, no, nothing like that, thank God.

CASSIE
So why the time limit if there's no danger? What a cheat.

Inside the bathroom: Sam gets up and stands in front of the tub, just like we first met him.

Gus gives Cassie a blank stare.

CASSIE
Not that I would be looking forward to going to hell or the moon or anything.

Gus leans in, whispers something in her ear. Her face goes pale. She swallows.

Cassie backs up, and goes back to the bathroom. The door to the bathroom slowly closes.

CASSIE
Give me your shoes!

SAM
It's too late, Cass.

To her horror, the blood rises in the tub once more, a small stream of crimson flows towards Sam's feet.
SAM
You have to do it all over again. And this time...

The blood overflows out of the tub, more of a mess than before.

FADE OUT.