

SNEAK PREVIEW

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

HENRY, 18, comes walking down a sidewalk, stopping in front of an opera house style movie theater. Henry has curly brown hair and boyish features.

Henry walks up to the box office. DJ, 20s, stands behind the counter. DJ is nerdy looking with Coke bottle glasses and unkempt black hair.

HENRY

One for Hack and Slash Three, DJ, my good man.

DJ

Hack and Slash Three? Isn't that a bit easy for you, Henry?

HENRY

I'm not looking for a challenge, just some mild entertainment.

DJ

If you say so. Seven fifty.

Henry pays. DJ hands him the ticket.

DJ

Go easy on this one, Henry, or you're going to get banned.

HENRY

I'm not going to get banned. Everyone loves me here.

DJ

I'm warning you. Once customers stop coming, you're out of here.

Henry proceeds to the theater doors.

HENRY

(sarcastically)  
Thanks for the advice.

INT. MOVIE THEATER

Several people are gathered inside the movie theater. From the sounds around them, it is obvious they are watching a sex scene from a cheesy horror movie. Henry sits near the back of the theater enjoying popcorn and soda.

In the row directly beneath the projector room sits a HOODED FIGURE. They are completely shrouded in darkness, leaving only the faintest outline just barely visible.

HENRY

Oh, she's going to die! If you're not a virgin, you're dead!

A DISGRUNTLED VIEWER, 30s, sits a few rows down from Henry. He looks like he's about to snap. When Henry takes a loud sip from his soda cup, the viewer shivers with rage.

HENRY

The black guy's got to die too! No reparations for you, Fifty Cent!

Female screaming and the sound of a chainsaw fills the room.

HENRY

See?! Told you!

The viewer turns around.

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER

Shh!

HENRY

Shh, yourself! Haven't you ever seen a horror movie before?!

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER

Be quiet!

Henry scoffs. The viewer turns back to the screen.

Male screaming fills the room. Henry bursts into laughter.

HENRY  
 (laughs)  
 Oh shit! That's got to hurt!

The viewer turns back to Henry.

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER  
 Can you please just shut the fuck up?!

HENRY  
 You shut the fuck up! I paid good  
 money for this!

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER  
 Alright! That's it!

The viewer gets up out of his seat and heads toward Henry.

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER  
 I'm going to teach you a lesson, you  
 little shit!

An USHER, 20s, blocks the viewer's path. He points a  
 flashlight directly into his face.

USHER  
 That's it, pal! You're out of here!

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER  
 But he—

USHER  
 Get out!

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER  
 But—

USHER  
 Out!

The disgruntled viewer hangs his head in shame and proceeds  
 sulking to the exit. Along the way, he turns to Henry.

DISGRUNTLED VIEWER  
 I'm going to get—

USHER

Keep moving, you! I don't care what he did!

The PROJECTIONIST, 40s, looks down from his room overlooking the theater. His geekiness rivals that of DJ.

PROJECTIONIST

Man, if it wasn't for Henry, I'd quit.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Henry leans against a wall in front of the movie theater, finishing his soda. People empty out of the theater. Many people throw Henry disapproving glances.

An OLD MAN, 60s, spots Henry and hobbles over to him. The man is squat and bespectacled.

OLD MAN

There you are, Sonny. You were better than the whole movie. I was laughing the whole time.

HENRY

Thanks. I do my best. Not many recognize heckling as an art form.

OLD MAN

Oh, don't mind them.

HENRY

Hey. It's their loss. How do they expect to get through life if they can't have a sense of humor?

OLD MAN

Couldn't have said it better myself.

HENRY

Keeps Hollywood on their tows too. If they didn't make so many bad movies, I'd be out of a job.

OLD MAN

They just don't make movies like they used to.

HENRY

You said it, mister.

Henry slurps up the rest of his soda and throws the cup in a trashcan.

HENRY

Anyway, show's over. I got to go home.  
Nice talking to you.

Henry proceeds down the sidewalk.

OLD MAN

Keep up the good work, Sonny!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Henry walks on the sidewalk down a deserted street. The surrounding area is that of a small, quaint town.

Henry whistles while he walks. Behind him, the hooded figure from the theater flies across the street. Henry stops whistling and turns around; nothing.

Henry continues to walk.

FIGURE P.O.V.

The figure trails Henry, moving closer to him by the second. Henry turns just as the figure ducks into an alley.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Henry stares behind him for a moment.

HENRY

(laughs)  
What a cliché.

Henry continues to walk and resumes whistling as well.

HOODED FIGURE

Hey buddy!

Henry jerks around. The hooded figure stands behind him. He wears a gray trench coat over a hooded sweatshirt.

The figure throws the hood back to reveal a boyish face with lengthy brown hair. This is MOVIE DUDE, 20s.

MOVIE DUDE

Sorry about that. I like to surprise people. Cliché, I know.

HENRY

Do I know you?

MOVIE DUDE

You do now.

HENRY

Who are you?

MOVIE DUDE

Just your friendly, neighborhood movie dude.

HENRY

Okay... What do you want?

MOVIE DUDE

Saw you at Hack and Slash Three. Saw you at a lot of movies. You seem like a dude who really likes movies. Just like me! I was wondering if you wanted to buy a ticket to a sneak preview.

HENRY

Sneak preview, eh? I'm interested. What's the movie?

MOVIE DUDE

Cthulhu versus The Kraken.

HENRY

Cthulhu versus The Kraken?  
(laughs)  
Sounds terrible... how much?

MOVIE DUDE

Twenty bucks.

HENRY

Twenty bucks?

MOVIE DUDE

The movie doesn't come out until next year, man. What do you expect?

Henry considers this.

MOVIE DUDE

Alright, you seem like a classy guy. How about fifteen?

HENRY

Make it ten.

MOVIE DUDE

Ten it is.

HENRY

You got yourself a deal.

Henry reaches for his pocket.

MOVIE DUDE

Wait, wait. Technically, I'm not supposed to be selling these until next week. Let's do it over here.

Movie Dude proceeds towards an alley. Henry follows.

EXT. ALLEY

MOVIE DUDE

Alright, my man.

Henry gives Movie Dude a ten-dollar bill.

MOVIE DUDE

Ten dollars...

Movie Dude opens a door leading into a storage room.

MOVIE DUDE

Right this way, dude.

HENRY

What?

MOVIE DUDE

I told you I'm not supposed to be selling these just yet. I want to be extra safe.

Henry shrugs and enters the storage room.

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Movie Dude enters and closes the door behind them.

MOVIE DUDE

And here's your sneak preview.

Movie Dude flips a switch, plunging the room into complete darkness.

HENRY

Hey! What the fuck?

Henry hears scuttling.

HENRY

What are you doing? Seriously bro, I don't swing that way.

A dull thud is heard, followed by a grunt, and a second, louder thud.

MOVIE DUDE

Asshole.

INT. MOVIE ROOM

Only Henry's face is visible. There is a large purple lump on his forehead. A bright beam of light shines on him from above.

His eyes flicker open. They look completely normal.

HENRY

I can see. I can see!

(laughs)

Just a dream. Just a stupid-

Henry sees that he is bound a chair. His hands have been tied to wooden boards with wires.

There is a movie screen directly in front of him and a table with an apple, a popcorn bucket, a meat cleaver, and a microwave on it. The rest of the room is dark.

HENRY

Hey... hey, what the fuck!

Movie Dude appears beside him.

MOVIE DUDE

Wakie, wakie.

HENRY

What the fuck is this?! Get me out of this chair, asshole!

MOVIE DUDE

You know, most people in your position would be begging for their life right about now.

HENRY

Are you kidding? I'm tied to a chair in front of what? A movie screen. I know what's going on. This is a fucking marketing ploy. I know you Hollywood types.

MOVIE DUDE

This is just what I'd expect from you, Henry. Your life is in my hands and you think the whole thing's a joke. Everything's a joke to you.

HENRY

Come on, dude. This is a joke. Let me guess. I'm being sacrificed to the Great Old Ones, right? Not bad. I'll admit it, not bad. But being tied to this chair really sucks ass if you ask me. Let me out!

A pause before Movie Dude's expression becomes lighter.

MOVIE DUDE

Alright, you caught me. This is all one marketing ploy.

HENRY

Like I said. Now let me out.

MOVIE DUDE

Come on, Henry. You paid for this. I want you to get your money's worth. Besides, you might learn something. What do you say, buddy?

HENRY

I say get me out of this chair, asshole!

MOVIE DUDE

Sorry. No can do.

Movie Dude picks up the meat cleaver.

MOVIE DUDE

You left-handed or right-handed, Henry?

HENRY

Dude, get me the fuck out of—

MOVIE DUDE

Right-handed. Definitely.

HENRY

Alright. If you're not going to let me out of this chair, at least stop fucking around and start the movie. I paid for this, like you said? Remember?

MOVIE DUDE

Soon, Henry. Soon.

HENRY

(laughs)

That's a nice looking prop you got there. What are you going to do with that?

MOVIE DUDE

Oh, you already figured that out, Henry. I'm going to sacrifice you to the Great Old Ones.

HENRY

Let's get it over with then so we can start the movie!

MOVIE DUDE

Okay. First, let's put this apple in your mouth. Just so it looks good, you know?

Movie Dude picks up the apple. Henry bites into it and holds it in place.

MOVIE DUDE

Alright. Here it comes...

Movie Dude swings the meat cleaver through the apple, slicing it in half. Henry spits out the one still in his mouth.

HENRY

Hey... that's not real, is it?

MOVIE DUDE

(sighs)

Now we're getting somewhere.

Movie Dude slams the meat cleaver down onto Henry's right pinkie, slicing it off. Henry screams. Movie Dude places his hand over his mouth.

MOVIE DUDE

Now... you still think this is all just one big marketing ploy?

Henry shakes his head. Movie Dude removes his hand from Henry's mouth and wipes the meat cleaver off on his coat.

HENRY

What the fuck do you want?!

MOVIE DUDE

This is still a sneak preview, buddy. Just not the kind you were expecting. I'm just preparing for it.

HENRY

Why me?!

MOVIE DUDE

That's a good question, Henry. Because you're an asshole, that's why! You go to the movies just to laugh at them. Even when you're not supposed to laugh. You get your kicks out of watching people get tortured and killed. People like you are less than human. I'm just doing a public service here, dude.

HENRY

What the fuck?! They're just movies!

MOVIE DUDE

And even if you're not getting a kick out of gratuitous violence, you're ruining the movie for everyone else in the theater. They paid good money to enjoy themselves just like you, dude.

HENRY

What the... I...

MOVIE DUDE

Exactly. You can't come up with an excuse because there is no excuse. You're an asshole, Henry. Like I said.

HENRY

But people heckle movies all the time!

MOVIE DUDE

True but at least you'll be one less heckler to ruin everybody's good time at the movies.

A fearful expression comes over Henry's face.

HENRY

So you're going to kill me?!

MOVIE DUDE

If hope it doesn't come to that. Like I said, you might learn something from this whole experience. If you do, I'll let you go. If not—

Henry bursts into maniacal laughter.

HENRY

This isn't happening! This is not  
happening! This is...

Henry continues to ramble on.

MOVIE DUDE

Oh Henry, you were off to such a good  
start. Why start with the jokes again?

Henry cackles hysterically.

MOVIE DUDE

Okay...

Movie Dude chops off Henry's right ring finger. His laugh  
instantly turns into a scream.

MOVIE DUDE

Get the picture? This is serious, dude.  
Can't you stop laughing for two  
seconds?

HENRY

You sick fuck! Why fucking hecklers?!  
Why not fucking pimps?! Drug dealers?!

MOVIE DUDE

Because hecklers just... irritate me.

HENRY

You fucking maniac! I'll get you for  
this!

MOVIE DUDE

No you won't.

HENRY

I—

MOVIE DUDE

Remember, Henry. I've seen you at the  
movie theater. You come early, when the  
lights are still on, just so you can  
laugh at the stills before the previews

MOVIE DUDE

even start. I'm there even before that and you never see me. No one ever does. And you think you're going to get me? Ha! Shame on you! You think you're the victim here, dude? You don't know what it's like Henry.

HENRY

What the—

MOVIE DUDE

You don't know how hard it is to make a movie. It takes a long time. You get no sleep. You have to deal with fucking asshole producers. Studio execs. It's hard work. To see some little shit like you pick a movie apart just makes me sick. You have no respect for the people that put them together... That's my dream, you see. I want to be one of those guys. And no fucking heckler is going to stand in my way!

HENRY

Fuck! I'm not stopping you!

(laughs)

You're just fucking insane!

Henry's laugh ticks off Movie Dude and he raises his cleaver to chop off another finger.

HENRY

Wait... wait a minute, I didn't mean it like that... I didn't mean... Come on, man! I'm... You know I'm... I can't help it! Don't!

The meat cleaver slams onto the board between Henry's two severed fingers, cutting only wood.

MOVIE DUDE

Come on, Henry, I'm a nice guy. I wouldn't cut off the rest of your fingers...

Henry lets out a sigh of relief.

MOVIE DUDE

On your right hand!

The meat cleaver comes down onto Henry's left hand, severing its pinkie. Henry howls in agony.

MOVIE DUDE

Well Henry, I think we're about ready to start the show.

Movie Dude picks up the popcorn bucket. The cornels rattle inside it.

MOVIE DUDE

You like popcorn, Henry?  
(no response)

I do.

Movie Dude places the popcorn in the microwave. He is about to activate but suddenly hesitates.

MOVIE DUDE

Whoops! Almost forgot the secret ingredient.

Movie Dude walks over to Henry and collects his severed fingers, dropping them into the popcorn bucket. Henry's eyes widen in horror.

MOVIE DUDE

I like a little extra bite to my snacks!

HENRY

Oh my God!!!

Movie Dude places the bucket in the microwave and activates it. A sickening grin crosses his face as Henry watches mortified.

INT. MICROWAVE

Inside the popcorn bucket, Henry's fingers begin to swell, scorch, and bubble. When the popcorn starts to pop, so do the fingers, splattering the inside of the bucket and microwave with blood and pink goo.

INT. MOVIE ROOM

The microwave stops and Movie Dude removes the popcorn bucket.

MOVIE DUDE  
Mmm... doesn't that smell good?

Henry gags.

Movie Dude swivels the popcorn around inside the bucket, smothering it in the bloody condiments.

MOVIE DUDE  
Let's start the show, buddy!

Movie Dude walks behind Henry's chair. He removes a remote control from his coat and points it to the ceiling. Immediately, an image comes on the screen. It is Henry staring at his non-cinematic self.

HENRY/MOVIE HENRY  
Oh my God!!!

MOVIE DUDE  
Isn't it great?

Henry unleashes a torrent of screaming.

MOVIE DUDE  
How about some popcorn, Henry? Huh?  
Huh?!

Movie Dude begins to force-feed Henry the popcorn smothered in his own blood, smearing his face with it. Henry gags and sputters, spewing the revolting snacks out of his mouth.

MOVIE DUDE  
You laughing now, Henry? Now that it's  
your life on the screen? Huh? Huh?! You  
laughing now?! You laughing now?!!!

HENRY  
No! No! Alright! Alright!!! I'll never  
heckle again! I'll never heckle  
again!!!

MOVIE DUDE

Sounds like you've learned something today, Henry. Time to say goodbye.

Henry watches on screen as Movie Dude raises the meat cleaver a final time.

HENRY

Wait! Wait, you said—

MOVIE DUDE

Goodbye Henry. Nice knowing you, dude.

HENRY

No!!!

Just before the cleaver descends on Henry's head, Movie Dude flips it around so that the blunt side hits Henry's skull, knocking him unconscious.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Henry lies asleep on his back on the sidewalk outside the alley.

VOICE (O.S.)

Henry. Henry!

Henry's eyes flutter open. Standing over him is DJ, the Usher, the Projectionist, and the Old Man from the movie theater.

DJ

You okay, Henry?

OLD MAN]

What's the matter, Sunny?

HENRY

(laughs)

A dream. Just a dream.

USHER

A dream?

PROJECTIONIST

What are you talking about, Henry?

Henry begins to point at each person.

HENRY

And you were there... and you were there... and you were there... and you—

When he points at the Old Man, he realizes his hand is missing two fingers.

HENRY

Holy shit!!!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Henry lies in a bed in a featureless hospital room. His hands are bandaged.

A NURSE opens the door.

NURSE

Henry, you have a visitor.

A COP, 40s, enters the room.

COP

How're you feeling, Henry?

HENRY

Okay, I guess.

The cop takes a seat beside the bed.

COP

Henry, I have some bad news.

Henry looks up at the ceiling.

COP

We searched the entire building. We didn't find anything. No screen. No projector. No microwave. No Movie Dude. We've had our guys at the movie theater for about a week now. There's been nobody who fits the description you gave us... We got nothing, Henry.

Henry continues to stare at the ceiling.

COP  
You going to say anything?  
(beat)

HENRY  
Whatever.

The cop sighs and exits. At the door, he turns.

COP  
Sorry Henry.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

SUPER: One Year Later...

INT. MOVIE THEATER

People sit in the movie theater watching what sounds like a comedy. Henry sits near the front with a box of gummy bears and a soda. He now has prosthetic fingers.

A HECKLER, 18, sits a few rows back from him.

HECKLER  
(laughs)  
What a fucking idiot!  
(laughs)  
Again?!

Henry turns around.

HENRY  
Hey, can you shut the fuck up! I'm  
trying to watch the movie!

HECKLER  
Fuck you! I paid good money for this  
just like you!

The Usher appears beside the Heckler shining a flashlight in his face.

USHER  
That's it, pal! You're out of here.

HECKLER  
But he—

USHER  
Get out!

HECKLER  
But—

USHER  
Out!!!

The Heckler proceeds to the exit sulking.

USHER  
I don't care what he did!

HENRY  
Thanks bro.

USHER  
Anytime, Henry.

HENRY  
Hey man, can you get me some more gummy  
bears?

USHER  
Sure thing, pal.

The Usher exits.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

People are flooding out of the movie theater. Henry stops in front of it to see a group of TEENAGERS kicking the Heckler who lies on the ground in a fetal position. Henry's cell phone rings. He answers it.

HENRY  
Hello?

MOVIE DUDE (V.O.)  
Hey buddy!

HENRY

You!

MOVIE DUDE (V.O.)

Just thought I'd check up on you to see how things are going. Still heckling?

INT. MOVIE ROOM

Movie Dude speaks on a cell phone.

MOVIE DUDE

Good, good. Anyway, I'd love to sit and chat, Henry, but I got stuff to do. Later dude.

Movie Dude hangs up the cell phone and turns to two people, a MOTHER, 30s, and a FATHER, 30s, bound to chairs. Wires bind their fingers.

MOVIE DUDE

Sorry about that. Now... where was I? Oh yeah.

Movie Dude removes the remote from his pocket and points to the back of the room. The room is instantly filled with the sounds of a cheesy horror movie.

MOVIE DUDE

Remember this? Liked it, huh? I'm sure your daughter did too.

Movie Dude stops the movie.

MOVIE DUDE

You know, I seem to remember that this was rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong violence slash gore, nudity, sexual situations, drug use, and, of course, naughty language. Did you know that?

The parents nod sheepishly.

MOVIE DUDE

With that said, what makes you think this movie is appropriate for a five

MOVIE DUDE  
year old girl who'll probably be  
scared by what she sees and traumatized  
for life?  
(no response)  
Tough one, eh?

Movie Dude picks up a butcher knife from off the table.

MOVIE DUDE  
Maybe Mr. Prop here can help you figure  
it out? Oh wait. I forgot. It's not a  
prop.

Movie Dude walks toward the mother.

CUT TO BLACK:

A sickening crunch and a female scream are heard over the  
black.

THE END