

The Cleaner

by
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INT. CONDO - DAY

An upscale living/dining room, with a breakfast bar connecting the entryway to the kitchen.

A large dark bloodstain dominates the thick white rug between couches.

Next to the rug, a rubberized tarp is laid out with a man's body (50s) on it, the face covered by a cloth.

Tools are lined up at the edge of the tarp: circular saw, wire cutters, shears, ball hammer, hatchet, pliers.

A man (40s) garbed in butcher clothes, a heavy rubber apron, galoshes, and swim cap taps an iPhone docking station on the breakfast bar. "Don't Stop Me Now" by Queen starts playing (something similarly upbeat and cheery). He is THE CLEANER.

He starts bopping to the music as he pulls on heavy rubber gloves and lowers his eye protectors. He steps up to the body like a surgeon preparing to operate.

A key slides into the front door lock. His head snaps in that direction.

The lock turns and the door opens for THE BODYGUARD (30s), short hair, fit, in a slick suit. He carries two take out coffees.

BODYGUARD

Sorry I'm late, boss. You wouldn't believe the traffic.

He steps into the living room and stops dead. His eyes jump from the Cleaner to the body and back.

BODYGUARD

What is this?

The Cleaner makes no threatening motions as he turns round to shut the music off.

CLEANER

Relax, buddy, I'm just the cleaner.

BODYGUARD

Is that Mr. Krantz?

At a loss, the Cleaner looks around. He picks up a wallet from the bar and opens it.

CLEANER
Jonathan Krantz? Yeah.

The Bodyguard puts the coffees down on the bar. He lifts the cloth covering Krantz's face.

BODYGUARD
Shit.

CLEANER
You a relative?

BODYGUARD
His bodyguard.

CLEANER
Looks like you're out of a job, mate.

BODYGUARD
Who did this?

CLEANER
No clue.

The Bodyguard stands at his full height, intimidating.

BODYGUARD
If you're trying to protect your client--

CLEANER
Nah, I don't know that either.
It's all anonymous.

Frustrated, the Bodyguard kneels again. He leans over the body to examine the head.

BODYGUARD
Was he shot?

CLEANER
Blunt trauma, rounded edge. I was thinking wine bottle, maybe champagne.

The Bodyguard reaches his hand out, not sure where to put it.

The Cleaner checks his watch.

CLEANER
You want me to give you a minute?

The Bodyguard starts rifling through Krantz's pockets.

CLEANER

Looking for anything in particular?

BODYGUARD

You didn't happen to find a USB stick, did you?

CLEANER

Ah. Hang on.

The Cleaner struggles to remove one of the rubber gloves. He takes a USB stick out of his pocket and tosses it.

BODYGUARD

Great. My last paycheck.

The Bodyguard steps back. The Cleaner pulls the rubber glove back on.

BODYGUARD

You make a good living?

CLEANER

I make a killing.

The Cleaner laughs at his own joke.

BODYGUARD

If it's all anonymous, how do you get hired?

The Cleaner places plastic bags over Krantz's hands as he talks, securing them with zip ties.

CLEANER

The dark web. You know, bitcoin. That's what's on that USB stick, right?

BODYGUARD

He insisted. You have an opening?

CLEANER

What do I look like, McDonald's?

BODYGUARD

I just thought you'd want a partner or something.

The Cleaner points to the body.

CLEANER

Yeah, well, I checked with your last employer. He had some complaints.

BODYGUARD

That's not my fault! He wouldn't take my advice.

The Cleaner removes Krantz's socks before placing bags over his feet.

BODYGUARD

Look, I'll be straight with you. This family, they won't understand. I gotta lay low for a while.

The Cleaner zip ties the bags and stands up, assessing the Bodyguard.

CLEANER

You aren't squeamish, are you? Good physique...you have reliable transportation?

BODYGUARD

Yeah, sure.

The Bodyguard goes to the liquor cabinet next to the entryway. He pours a full glass of scotch.

BODYGUARD

Drink?

CLEANER

I'm working.

BODYGUARD

I'm laid off.

He drinks deeply and pours another. The Cleaner starts cutting away Krantz's shirt with the shears.

CLEANER

You drink often?

BODYGUARD

Not really. Damn, this is good.

CLEANER

I did have a partner until recently. He was a hunter.

(MORE)

CLEANER (CONT'D)

Really knew how to carve up a body. Do you hunt?

BODYGUARD

'fraid not. What happened to him?

CLEANER

The jerk got greedy and moved to Miami. Tons of work there.

The Cleaner removes pieces of shirt. The Bodyguard jumps to help him lift the body to get the shirt pieces pinned underneath.

BODYGUARD

Just give me a chance.

The Cleaner takes a moment to make up his mind.

CLEANER

Work's pretty rare, you understand. Lots of travel. Jail if you get caught.

BODYGUARD

Sure, I get it.

CLEANER

Expenses come out of your pocket, and there's no health or dental.

BODYGUARD

But it pays well?

CLEANER

Yeah, it pays well. You okay to start now? With your ex-boss?

BODYGUARD

(grinning)
You kidding? He was an asshole.

CLEANER

There's another apron in my bag there.

The Bodyguard jumps up excitedly. He rummages through the Cleaner's bag as the Cleaner turns the music back on.

They both start dancing to the upbeat tune as the Bodyguard dons the apron and the Cleaner starts cutting away Krantz's pants.