

Quality Control

By

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INT. WHITE ROOM - SURVEILLANCE CAMERA P.O.V.

Like an empty ice box, white, bright, and stark.

A MAN (early 20s) falls from above like a sack of cement, butt first. The pain of the impact doesn't seem to register.

Simple white clothes. Fit. Golden hair. Innocent face. His blue eyes wander around the room. He panics.

--No door. No windows. No escape.

MAN

Hey. HEY!

He stands up. Approaches us. Tilts his head upward.

MAN

I'm sorry.

He closes his eyes. Subdues his anger. Summons up his really-sorry face, which he cranes, filling up the frame.

MAN

I'm so sorry.

DAVID (V.O.)

(through speakers)

Me too clone 36.

MAN/CLONE 36

(teary)

Why are you doing this to me?

DAVID (V.O.)

You poked his goddamn eye out. Are we supposed to give you an ice-pick, and a couple more people to practice?

Clone 36 regresses to the farthest corner. Cowers down.

DAVID (V.O.)

Jesus, 36, what were you thinking?

THE CAMERA ZOOMS INTO--

--His ashamed and regretful face. Tears stream down.

READOUTS overlay on the screen corners; charts and statistics.

CLONE 36

I said I'm sorry. It was a mistake.

A red circle -part of the readouts- flashes for a second, then disappears. LAUGHTER filters through speakers.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Boy, are you good!

He stands up. Scowls at the accusation.

CLONE 36  
The fuck is that supposed to mean?

DAVID (V.O.)  
You see, I'm not completely  
defenseless against your acting  
talent. I have...

Colors drain from him.

DAVID (V.O.)  
...the most expensive bullshit  
sensors in the market to my help.

CLONE 36  
Well something is wrong with your  
fucking fancy sensors, 'cause I'm  
not lying.

The red circle flashes again.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Try harder, punk. Make it green. Or  
come out clean.

JUMP CUT TO Clone 36 stands against the wall, arms folded.

DAVID (V.O.)  
How did it happen?

CLONE 36  
He tried to kill me.

Red.

JUMP CUT TO Clone's 36 face fills the frame. Wet with tears.

CLONE 36  
He was harassing me since he was  
moved to our department. I told  
him: "lay off me, dude. Just  
fucking lay off me." He wouldn't--

Red.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Try the other line, Tom Hanks.

He SMACKS the camera with his palm in frustration.

JUMP CUT TO Clone 36 paces the room, hands behind his back.

CLONE 36  
I can make you an offer.

DAVID (V.O.)  
If it's not a blow job, I'm not  
interested.

He stops pacing. Heads toward us. Flashes a seductive smile.

CLONE 36  
Would you like me to?

DAVID (V.O.)  
(bursts out laughing)  
Now we're talking.

JUMP CUT TO Clone 36 lies on the floor as if in a coffin.

CLONE 36  
Why don't you stick me with your  
needle already?

DAVID (V.O.)  
You're reading my mind, kid. But  
it's the procedures. Three hours of  
behavior observation. See if your  
crime was an anomaly, or you're  
just a bad egg. So far, I'm not  
boiling you for breakfast.

He whimpers for while, then breaks into weeping.

DAVID (V.O.)  
And by the way, no injection for  
you. We just fucking incinerate you  
guys these days. It's the new  
protocol, and I'm loving it.

He sobs. It's very sincere this time, filled with the despair  
of a man facing an inevitable fate of death.

CLONE 36  
I'm sorry. I really am. It won't  
happen again.

--A green circle flashes for a second, then disappears.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Whoa, wait a second. Say that  
again.

CLONE 36  
I'm really sorry. Please forgive  
me.

The green circle lingers for a bit longer this time.

DAVID (V.O.)  
You made it, 36. You fucking made  
it.

He brightens up and wipes his tears with his sleeve.

DAVID (V.O.)  
But I won't let you out.

He sits up. Confused. Worry grips his heart. He stands up.

DAVID (V.O.)  
If I let you out, I'll have to  
write a five pages report.  
Opinions, readout analysis, and all  
that crap.

CLONE 36  
You can't do this. There are logs.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Broke a couple of good eggs by now.  
No one seems to notice. Stamp a  
bunch of papers. Go home early.  
It's awesome.

CLONE 36  
The hell is wrong with you? You  
gonna kill me because of a fucking  
report!

DAVID (V.O.)  
Well, obviously, you've never  
written one. You wouldn't  
understand.

He swivels and shouts at every wall, like a rotating-beacon  
of plea. Loud, futile, and heartbreaking.

CLONE 36  
Help! Help me! Somebody! I passed  
the test and he's gonna kill me.  
Anybody. Somebody help me--  
(collapses; defeated)  
--please.  
(crying)  
I want to live. Please, sir.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Shame you can't see me, 'cause I'm  
all tears right now...and out of  
popcorn.

He ponders a thought, then hope flickers in his eyes.

CLONE 36  
It's being recorded-- The video.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Don't pop the champagne cork just  
yet. They always fast-forward  
through it. Never hear the audio.

He bites a tiny patch of skin off his thumb. Blood streams  
out. He writes a red message on the wall with it:

**"I was wrongfully executed.**

**I deserved a second chance."**

DAVID (V.O.)  
 (mocks)  
 Goddamn you 36, you got me.  
 (pissed off)  
 I'll have to spend an extra 15  
 minutes to wipe your shit off the  
 wall. And trim this part off the  
 video. Big fucking deal.

JUMP CUT TO Clone 36 sits, with his back to the wall, under his bloody graffiti, not crying anymore. Calm. Accepting his fate.

DAVID (V.O.)  
 Times up, buddy. It's been a  
 pleasure.

A CLICK filters through speakers. CLICK! CLI-CLICK! CLICK!

DAVID (V.O.)  
 What the fuck?

FEMALE (V.O.)  
 David Stanley you are under arrest  
 for abusive use of authority and  
 unjustified execution of clones.  
 (beat)  
 Good job agent Leo. Wonderful  
 performance.

Arms on his knees, Clone 36/LEO lowers his head and swats the air dismissively: "Big deal."

A door, that didn't seem to be there before, slides open upward. A NURSE walks in with a first-aid kit. She kneels next to Leo and checks his wounded thumb.

He shakes his head in disbelief, then raises his sad face.

LEO  
 How many?--

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: "Video evidence #56"

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END