

SCUM

Written by Nathan Ivery

nathanivery7@gmail.com  
www.nathaniveryproductions.com  
07342951273

3rd December 2024

Made in Highland

**INT. SUNSHINE VALLEY LOCKER ROOM 1994. NIGHT.**

FADE IN.

The date 1994 appears across the screen. Earnie Finch (30) opens his locker with trepidation and pulls out a tatty overalls suit. Despite it being practically brand new, it has already been stained. Before closing the locker he delicately places a photo of a woman proudly holding a baby scan in the locker door. He lovingly smooths down the picture's edges so it becomes flush against the metal door. He takes a beat before closing it shut. A droll voice rasps over the tannoy.

V.O TANNOY

Can everyone please vacate the  
pool and gym areas, the leisure  
centre will be closing in 15  
minutes.

**INT. SUNSHINE VALLEY POOLSIDE. NIGHT.**

Earnie now stands on the fringes of the pool getting his cart ready for the evening clean. He shrinks a little as the two remaining lifeguards begin to make their way to the exit. They bump into Earnie's side as they go past but seem to pay him no attention. His anxiety ramps up, his hands tremble and his breathing becomes laboured. Desperately he rubs a sentimental necklace cross between his thumb and forefinger until he feels soothed.

Finally, alone, we can see Earnie begin to relax, he likes cleaning the pool. There's something therapeutic in the rituals of it all. It takes his mind off the constant noise of the outside world!

As Earnie bends over to check the filters, he begins to clear all of the muck out of the clogged grate. He stops as he hears a gurgling giggle noise from what sounds like the pool itself.

SAMANTHA

HEHE, you're funny.

Earnie turns his head in confusion and looks left to right in confusion, but sees nothing, no child left behind. Perhaps the lifeguards were playing their stupid games again? He continues with his job.

SAMANTHA

HEHE Stop it, that tickles.

This time Earnie sees it! A strange amalgamation of a child's face, floating in the water, made out of scum. His face widens into a grin. To his disbelief he finds himself talking back to it.

Made in Highland

EARNIE

What are you?

He pauses for a beat, then ventures...

EARNIE

Do you have a name?

SAMANTHA

What's a name?

EARNIE

You don't ay? Hmm, well, everyone should have a name.

SAMANTHA

Do you have one?

EARNIE

Yes, I'm uh called Earnie. Hmmm, I think you look like a Samantha, would you like me to call you that?

SAMANTHA

Yes! I like it. Hello Earnie, it's nice to meet you.

He smiles, still in disbelief.

EARNIE

Hello Samantha, it's very nice to meet you too.

#### **INT. MONTAGE. NIGHT.**

Match-cut montage of Earnie showing his mundane routine, starting with the locker being slammed and his cart being knocked over, followed by snickering laughs of long-gone lifeguards. These 3 moments repeat getting faster and faster all the while we see him age. A more vacant and passive expression creeps in each time.

#### **INT. SUNSHINE VALLEY POOLSIDE 2024. NIGHT.**

Match cut to 30 years later. The date 2024 appears across the screen. Earnie (now in his 60s) has a routine that is still the same. Sunshine Valley Leisure Centre is looking a lot more shabby compared to previously. He has become a fixture of the place. Seeing so many people come and go. Much of the pranks are still being played on him, but with a different generation of idiots. Another droll voice rasps over the tannoy.

Made in Highland

V.O TANNON

Can everyone please vacate the pool and gym areas, the leisure centre will be closing in 15 minutes.

As they continue to file out, Earnie stares into space. It is only broken by a gentle pat on his shoulder. Jen (early 20s) who lets out a big smile.

JEN

Ah well if it isn't my favorite person!

He blushes awkwardly.

JEN

Thanks for lending me this Earn,  
I've always wanted to read it.

She reaches out to hand the book back, which is Carmilla. As she does so a leaflet used as a makeshift bookmark falls out. Earnie picks it up. It reads University of London 2025.

EARNIE

What is this? going somewhere?

He hands it back to her as she exchanges the book. she takes it, looking a little embarrassed, but shows clear signs of excitement.

JEN

Just exploring my options. You should too! You are far too smart for this shithole. you HAVE heard the rumours right?

EARNIE

Ahh you know me Jen, I go where I'm needed. And where I'm needed is here.

She looks at him discerningly.

JEN

Well, think about it at least...

There is a sadness between the two, it seems like a conversation that has been had many times. she quickly breaks the tension.

JEN

Oh, we should get lunch tomorrow, my treat! as a thank you, and we can have a proper debrief about that ending.

Made in Highland

EARNIE

I'm glad you liked it but there's really no need.

JEN

AHH AH A no. I'm not having it, I still want to borrow your copy of 'Homer's Oddessey' and I need some way of buttering you up.

He chuckles, it's not often he gets to laugh, but it's normally Jen that brings it out of him when he does. She reaches out and touches his shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze.

JEN

Great! I'll see ya tomorrow then. I hope work isn't too dull. Watch out that Carmilla isn't around to get youuu! (laughing playfully) ... uhh I cannot imagine this place at night.

She looks around, entertaining that notion, takes a beat and mock shudders. Smiling one last time.

JEN

Anyways...Night Earn!

She heads for the door.

Earnie stands there for a beat. His finger and thumb gently rub at his cross necklace as he stares vacantly into space.

Finally, Earnie lets out a long sigh as he settles into a routine before a disembodied voice starts talking from a nearby skimmer. But Earnie is unphased by this.

V.O SAMANTHA

I don't like that girl she uses you. Distracts you.

EARNIE

Who? Jen? Don't be daft.

Earnie walks around the pool, bends down and opens up a panel next to the pool's filters. Retrieving a small bag from his overall pocket.

EARNIE

Are you hungry?

He empties the contents which consist of hair, toenail clipping and used plasters into the filter. As he does so, he bends over. Now talking to the skimmer directly.

Made in Highland

EARNIE

Not coming out today? C'mon, let me see that smile. (he coos)

There is a long pause. He shuffles over sitting at the pool edge, placing his hand next to the skimmer.

EARNIE

I know you are worried but... (in a gentle tone.) ...We have all the time in the world.

V.O SAMANTHA

(In a small voice) That's just it Dad, we don't.

Another long pause.

V.O SAMANTHA

I know the centre is closing. This place has got a month tops before Jamerson pulls the plug.

Earnie stops in his tracks, his hand shaking momentarily. He breathes before pushing his anxieties down.

EARNIE

NO. No that's not going to happen.

V.O SAMANTHA

Times running out. We need to act quickly before it's too late. I need more feed, not just scraps.

EARNIE

Well, what do you want me to do?

V.O SAMANTHA

If you could just let me do it my way...

EARNIE

No Samantha, were not doing this again. You know the rules.

V.O SAMANTHA

Look the bigger the pieces the longer I can sustain my form. Each time it gets easier to maintain my beautiful new shape.

There is a long pause, Earnie looks gaunt and horrified. His fingers yet again clutched at his cross.

Made in Highland

V.O SAMANTHA

Please Earnie, you're the only  
one who can help me.

He is grounded by her words. He is brought back to focus,  
listening to her plea. He looks at his arm then looks at the  
skimmer, before letting out a sigh. He closes his eyes as if  
he knows the mistake he is about to make.

EARNIE

Ok. but You have to promise me  
something...

FADE OUT.

**INT. LOCKER ROOM. DAY.**

We see a tired Earnie, he is sitting at the staff room table.  
The copy of Carmilla is laid out next to his lunchbox.

Jen runs into the room. Her manic excitement disperses the  
sombre atmosphere.

JEN

Earn! there you are, guess what!

Before Earnie gets a chance to react, she thrusts her phone  
into his peripheral vision. Earnie slips on his glasses. We  
see an email addressed to Jen that reads;  
"Dear Jennifer Clifton. Congratulations! you are now admitted  
to the class of 2025 at the University of London in Creative  
Writing and English Literature."

Earnie Looks up in astonishment.

They embrace in a warm hug. We focus closely on Earnie's  
face. Despite clearly being proud and happy for her, he is  
also sad that she is leaving him.

EARNIE

That's amazing Jen! But when...  
er when do you leave?

JEN

End of next week. still got alot  
of packing up to do. But  
honestly, I can't wait to get  
outta this shit hole.

The two of them slump into the opposite seats at the table.

EARNIE

Haha well, Gary will certainly  
miss you.

Jen rummages through her bag looking for her lunchbox.

JEN

Oh, I cannot wait to get away  
from him and everyone else in  
this dump...

Realising how that sounds she stops and looks Earnie in the eyes. She reaches out and touches his left arm.

JEN

Not you though. I will REALLY  
miss hanging out with you. ( She  
means it.)

Earnie meets Jen's gaze and smiles. She squeezes his arm, and he flinches, causing him to pull away. He rubs his arm gently.

JEN

You alright? What's up with your  
arm?

EARNIE

Oh nothing, it's just a bit sore.

In an attempt to break the silence, Jen continues.

JEN

Um, So how have you been? We  
never got to do lunch!

EARNIE

Oh yeah sorry about that I've  
just had a lot going on lately,  
that's all.

JEN

Have you found a new job yet?

EARNIE

Um, No. I've been a bit  
preoccupied.

JEN

(Kindly but stern) With what?

He shrugs.

EARNIE

It's complicated.

JEN

Why??? I just don't understand!  
You don't need this place!

He sits there passively.

Made in Highland



To prove her point she takes Carmilla off the table and flicks to the last page, she drops it down onto the table. there is a note inscribed on the final page. that reads. *"To my beautiful Earnie, I hope this book will remind you what a brilliant human and wonderful husband you are. Go and make us proud! your talents hold no bounds. Love Robyn."*

EARNIE

(Playfully sarcastic) Well. I wasn't always a pool cleaner you know. I used to write for a living.

JEN

I knew it!

Jen leans in listening intently. She rests her head in her hands and looks at him, imploring him to continue.

Earnie laughs a little embarrassedly.

EARNIE

I mean, it was never anything amazing, just a few short stories here and there. But you know it paid the bills.

He sits wistfully, remembering a simpler time.

EARNIE

Me and my wife were quite happy.

As if remembering something he points at the copy of Carmilla, then opens up to a page, where a passage has been highlighted.

EARNIE

She was the one who introduced me to this.

Jen smiles, she turns her attention to the book on the table.

She picks up the book and reads it aloud.

JEN

"Girls are caterpillars while they live in the world, to be finally butterflies when the summer comes."

EARNIE

Yeah, it was Robyn's favourite.

He gently takes it from her and opens it at a random page.

JEN

You never mentioned her, your wife.

Earnie is desperate to avoid eye contact with Jen and so begins to flick through the pages absent-mindedly.

EARNIE

Yes, um,... well it was a complicated birth you see... Robyn didn't make it. Nor did our little girl. Not long after I ended up here. I've always been a bit anxious but it got so loud in my head that I couldn't focus. I'd just THEIR names over and over again. So I decided I needed something lowkey until I got back on my feet. I never meant to stay, but then that's life, isn't it? ...It's unpredictable.

Jen with teary eyes, takes his hand and squeezes it.

JEN

I'm so sorry, I didn't know.

Earnie, who's wiping away one of his tears. shrugs.

EARNIE

How could you? I've not told a single person in this building anything about myself. Except you.

JEN

I understand. I do. really...

Without saying a word Earnie feels all the pain Jen carries. They sit in silent understanding. Jen's breathing becomes more laboured and we see she is on the verge of losing it. Until we see Earnie's welcoming embrace. He wraps his arms around her bringing her close. She doesn't fight it. We linger on this for a beat. Taking the time to see how this moment has affected them both.

The silence is broken by Jen, who begins to laugh.

JEN

What a pair of dafties we are.

Earnie is also now laughing with her. They pull away from each other and resume their initial positions around the table.

Made in Highland

JEN

But you're still here why?

A concealed smile creeps across Earnie's face.

EARNIE

Oh you know, I have a duty of care. This old place needs me.

JEN

I was thinking, (she says tentatively) maybe you could go back to university or I dunno take a class or something!

He looks at her dubiously.

JEN

Give me your phone a minute.

He digs out an ancient iPhone and slides it across the table for her to use.

JEN

Good god man, what century is this from?

She spends a minute taping away on the screen before sliding it back across the table.

JEN

Here... Just promise me that you'll take a look.

We see a mobile jobs app on the screen.

EARNIE

Okay. I promise I'll take a look. I just need to finish up hear.

This is lost on Jen who looks at him confusingly.

He gets up from the table, as if spurred on by something and begins to leave to room only to be stopped one last time by Jen.

JEN

Earnie? What was your little girl's name? if you don't mind me asking?

He smiles sadly.

EARNIE

Samantha, she was gonna be our little Sammy.

Made in Highland

He turns the corridor out of sight. As he does so, we get closer to a pipe near the wall. We follow it as it snakes its way down the building until it reaches a larger pipe. We see the outline of something human-like heavily breathing as she listens intently. With a roar of anguish, the human-like creature crawls along until it is out of sight. It slithers along muttering intensely to itself.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO.

**INT. POOLSIDE. DAY.**

The swimming pool is full of children, playing. We focus on one small girl. She plays alone in the pool as her brothers take up the attention of their mother.

CUT TO.

A P.O.V. angle. We are half submerged in the water. Almost as if we are peering upwards from a drain. From this perspective, Our focus is on a little girl. She ventures out into the deep end of the pool towards the skimmer.

SAMANTHA

Hey, over here!

The girl looks around trying to work out who said that. With no one there, she ignores it and carries on with her lap.

SAMANTHA

Hey! This way. I'm right over here!

This time the girl stops. She slowly swims closer to the source of the noise. She approaches a nearby skimmer in the corner of the pool, towards the deeper end. A familiar voice rings out from within the skimmer, in a small yet sinister tone.

SAMANTHA

Come play with me.

FADE OUT.

**INT. RECEPTION. DAY.**

Earnie is lazily cleaning, he stops in his tracks, as if noticing for the first time, he is aware of how barren the rooms now seem. reminding Earnine that the end is near for this old building.

We hear a notification ping, he stops putting his spectacles on to read it. It's a job notification from the app Jen put on his phone.

But before we can read the full message we are brought out by a distressed woman.

A still dripping-wet woman in her bathing suit comes bounding into the reception. She frantically runs over to Jamerson the manager at the reception desk, babbling about her missing daughter.

MOTHER

Have you seen a girl out here?  
brown hair? Abby? where are you  
Love! stop playing games it's not  
funny!

All the chaos seeps into the background, Jamerson calls out onto the tannoy, the women gets increasingly desperate and time slows down. As we focus solely on Earnie, he slowly understands what is happening and sheer panic and dread spread across his face. A loud pounding noise creeps in getting louder and louder drowning away any noise outside his head.

CUT TO BLACK.

**INT. POOLSIDE. NIGHT.**

We see flashes of the pool and different places in the building. All is calm, all is still. Until we see Earnie stride out to the pool edge. There is no one left in the building except for him and Samantha.

EARNIE

What did you do?

There's a long silence, his words echo around the room.

EARNIE

What did you do Samantha?

EARNIE

The police aren't looking here  
yet, but they will be. That  
little girl, never left the  
building, did she?

Silence again. We eagerly await a response.

EARNIE

I LIED FOR YOU! I looked into the  
eye of that little girl's mother  
and lied. (Earnie holding his  
head in his hands despairingly.)

He isn't getting a response. In frustration, he lets out a scream of anger. It bounces off of the pool echoing around the building. He takes a beat, pulls out the cross and thinks about rubbing it, before pulling the chain off and throwing it to the pool.

He rolls up a sleeve. We see his wrist covered in sores and wounds, like a dog had been at it.

Made in Highland

EARNIE

I gave up everything for you, and  
this is how you repay me. Why?  
She was just a little girl,  
Sammy?

On that note, he buckles and is forced to sit down. His feet  
now dangling over the edge.

EARNIE

It should have been me. You  
should have taken me.

V.O SAMANTHA

This is as much your fault as it  
is mine.

Earnie is shaken by her sudden vocals. Looking around, he is  
haunted by her words, frantically trying to ascertain her  
whereabouts.

V.O SAMANTHA

If you had just listened to me.  
We could have left this shit hole  
together. Instead, you chose to  
let us both rot.

SAMANTHA

I did what I did to survive. I  
did it for us. We deserve to be a  
real family.

Trying to ignore this fact, Earnie pushes down the guilt and  
continues.

EARNIE

And your life was more important  
than hers? Hmm? She had a family  
too you know. Now they're just as  
broken as us.

SAMANTHA

You take the hand that's dealt to  
you.

EARNIE

I never taught you that.

SAMANTHA

NO. you didn't.

There is a long deafening pause as Earnie process her  
statement.

Earnie lets out a long defeated breath.

EARNIE

I should have left you to die.  
(MORE)

Made in Highland

EARNIE (CONT'D)  
Just a piece of shit floating in  
the water.

V.O SAMANTHA  
Yes. But you didn't.

Earnie begins to stand.

V.O SAMANTHA  
I know what I did was wrong. but  
I need your help. One last time.

Earnie musters up what little courage he has left. Walking  
over to the pool. He stops at the edge. Before bringing  
himself closer to the water.

EARNIE  
(shaking his head) Not this time.  
The kind thing would be to put  
you out of your misery. But I  
can't.

EARNIE  
It was wrong of me to try and  
make you into something you're  
not.  
Goodbye, Sammy.

(In a tone of voice that sounds a lot more like Jen's than  
Samantha's)

V.O SAMANTHA  
Wait, please... Dad...  
I can be whoever you want me to  
be...

Samantha finally reveals herself, (to us the audience and  
Earnie.)

We see an outline of a putrid figure that rises from the  
water. We see a bastardised version of Jen, Her form built  
from 30 years' worth of discarded tissue.

We focus on Earnie as his face turns to pure dread at the  
sight and realisation of this abomination. She swims closer  
towards Earnie, Samantha looks at him imploringly but finds  
nothing but repulsion. The last vestiges of Samanantha Fintch  
are gone. Leaving only the monster.

EARNIE  
What are you? (in a horrified  
tone)

SAMANTHA  
I am ME!

Her hand reaches out and grabs his ankle.

Made in Highland

Earnie is pulled into the water. Waves thrash violently as there is a scrumage. We focus on it briefly before moving upwards focusing on the ceiling, as the water bounces off the light. Until the sound of violent splashing dies down, and all becomes still.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO.

Everything feels a lot more eerie and liminal in the various empty spaces of the Leisure Centre. Overlaying all this, we see Earnie's cross drifting at the bottom of the now-serene pool.

**INT. RECEPTION. NIGHT.**

A girl who looks a lot like Jen strides towards the door, she is dressed in a pair of overalls, two sizes too big. She wipes a small tear of blood from her eye and dons a battered old cap that covers the top half of her face. She trembles with anticipation, a big toothy grin spread across her face like a Cheshire cat. As the doors open, she takes a beat and steps out into her new life.

THE END.

Made in Highland