

The Dead-iest Catch

Matthew David

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

CAMERA OPERATOR 1 and CAMERA OPERATOR 2 shoot the arrival of an EXTENDED CAB PICKUP TRUCK outside of an old warehouse. Camera Operator 1 is an early-20s guy wearing cargo shorts and a graphic t-shirt. He looks like a semi-pro camera operator. Camera Operator 2 is a mid-20s stoner/slacker type.

FRANK, early 30s and heavy set, exits the drivers side. He wears a GREEN BASEBALL CAP pierced with FISHING HOOKS, a FLANNEL SHIRT, JEANS, and WORK BOOTS.

RONNIE, mids-20s and good looking, jumps out of the passenger side. He wears a BLACK T-SHIRT showing a bald eagle with lightning in the background. He straps on a BELT with a number of POUCHES.

They head to the back of the truck to grab and put on ORANGE HUNTING JACKETS.

While doing so, they address the cameras, speaking in thick southern redneck accents.

SUBTITLE: "FRANK HANSEN - GHOST HUNTER THIRD CLASS"

FRANK

Ghost huntin' is about the only true sport left. Next best thing to huntin' another human, you know, on account of how they used to be humans.

SUBTITLE: "RONNIE KINZIE - APPRENTICE GHOST HUNTER"

RONNIE

'cept for animal ghosts.

Ronnie is putting a variety of items in his workman's belt, including a HAMMER, GLOW STICKS, a FLASHLIGHT, various other TOOLS, and BEEF JERKY.

FRANK

Hope it ain't an animal ghost we got tonight.

RONNIE

Damn things never shut up.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Got a call of supernatty activity here. Not sure how many undead perpetrators. More fun not knowin'. But kids, don't try this at home. We're professionals.

RONNIE

Beer?

FRANK

What do you think?

Ronnie tosses Frank a BEER. Frank pops the tab.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank, Ronnie, and the Camera Operators enter the main storage area of the warehouse. Frank and Ronnie each carry their own long, thin WOODEN CASE.

Large BOXES create a labyrinth.

FRANK

Now, the first order of business is to determine if this is a real supernatty event or just kids playin' pranks. First thing --

RONNIE

Frank! I got somethin'!

Ronnie motions to a door handle that's covered in ECTOPLASMIC GOOP.

FRANK

Woooo weeeee! Look at that! Look! At! That! That is fresh. Just feel that viscosity.

Frank takes some of the goop and rubs it in his fingers.

RONNIE

Looks like a ghost hocked a loogie all over that.

FRANK

Common misconception.

As Frank talks to the camera, Ronnie wanders off.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Your basic ectoplasm, while similar to boogies in appearance and taste, actually does not come from a ghost's nostrils. This here is red flag number one that this might be a real hauntin'.

RONNIE

Frank! I got somethin' else.

FRANK

All right Ronnie! What ya got for me this time?

Ronnie proudly holds a HUMAN SKULL.

RONNIE

I think we found our boy! At least what's left of his body.

He hands the skull to Frank.

FRANK

Now, Ronnie, I can see you're excited, and that's why you missed out on a clue.

RONNIE

What's that, Frank?

Frank turns the skull upside down and points at the bottom.

FRANK

Most skulls I've come across do not say "Made in China" on the bottom. This here is what you call a false positive.

RONNIE

But...maybe...Chinese people do that to their skulls. They are Communists.

FRANK

Good point. Why don't you show me where you got this.

Ronnie leads Frank over to a partially open CARDBOARD BOX.

RONNIE

It was sittin' right here.

(CONTINUED)

Frank digs into the STYROFOAM of the cardboard box and pulls out two more SKULLS.

RONNIE

Well ain't that a thing. Reckon a ghost or a serial killer? Or a serial killer who is also a ghost?

Frank silently shines a FLASHLIGHT on the side of the box. It's labeled "HANK'S HALLOWEEN SUPPLY."

FRANK

(whisper)

Oh shit...

Frank goes to a large STACK OF BOXES and runs his flashlight across them. They're all labeled "HANK'S HALLOWEEN SUPPLY."

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ronnie...our job just got a whole lot tougher...

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank talks to the camera. Ronnie plays with SILLY STRING in the background. He wears a WIZARDS CLOAK.

FRANK

(to camera)

Camouflage. A Halloween storage warehouse is a perfect place for a ghost to hide.

Ronnie blasts more Silly String.

RONNIE

Expelliarmus!

FRANK

Either this ghost is one crafty sumbitch, or Ronnie and I are gonna look pretty stupid by the end of the night.

Ronnie holds up a WAND.

RONNIE

Frank! I'm Harry Potter! I'm Harry Potter!

Frank shakes his head, annoyed.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK  
(to camera)  
And if anyone is Harry Potter, it's  
me.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Just back from commercial break, Ronnie, Frank, and the  
Camera Operators are running like hell down a flight of  
stairs. Ronnie wears a SCARY ALIEN MASK.

FRANK  
Run!

RONNIE  
Go! Go! Go!

Frank and Ronnie keep shouting at each other to hurry as  
they run out of the warehouse.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Frank and Ronnie continue running all the way back to their  
pick up truck.

Ronnie jumps in the back, opens a BLUE COOLER. It's filled  
with P.B.R. and ICE.

RONNIE  
Oh thank God!

Frank arrives, totally out of breath.

RONNIE  
I am so sorry!

FRANK  
(out of breath)  
Ronnie...in this neighborhood...you  
do NOT leave a cooler of beer in  
the back of a truck.

Frank angrily pulls out a can and starts chugging  
it. Ronnie, still wearing the scary alien mask, hangs his  
head in shame.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY - ONE HOUR LATER

Frank peers through an open door and motions the camera  
operator up.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

All right, I think we just found some good solid evidence. Take a look.

The camera operator moves to the doorway to look inside to the warehouse break room.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WAREHOUSE BREAKROOM - NIGHT

Cabinets BANG, the walls BLEED, and we hear a loud SCREAMING. The lights FLICKER on and off.

FRANK

I'm not sure if you can tell, but that there is poltergeist activity. Now your basic poltergeist is like a ghost with ADD.

RONNIE

Except ghost ADD gets worse over time since psychostimulants and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors aren't effective on ghosts.

FRANK

Absolutely. Now keep in mind that we are shooting live, folks. Anything can happen.

The poltergeist activity STOPS.

RONNIE

Like that.

FRANK

Okay, I'd say we're about 30 to 40 percent sure this isn't a bunch of kids playin' a prank now.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Frank, Ronnie, and the two camera operators are back in the main warehouse storage area.

Camera Operator 1 starts to levitate off the ground and makes MOANING noises.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

We got a dead one! Get your ghost catcher, Ronnie!

Frank and Ronnie open their long WOODEN CASES and take out FISHING RODS with GLOW STICKS taped to them.

With whoops and hollers, Frank and Ronnie cast their fishing hooks at the hovering camera operator.

RONNIE

Woo wee! He's a biggn!

FRANK

Don't break the line! Don't break the line!

Eventually they pull Camera Operator 1 to the floor.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ronnie! Get the ghost containment field ready!

Ronnie drops his rod and reaches into a BAG.

Frank gives the fishing line another good yank. BILLY JOE, a mid 30s bald ghost wearing a sweaty wife beater, is pulled out of the camera operator. Billy Joe is still hooked. Ronnie throws a NET on him. Camera Operator 1 recovers his dropped camera. He instantly goes back to his job.

RONNIE

Gotcha!

BILLY JOE

Hey! You can't treat me this way! I got rights!

SUBTITLE: "BILLY JOE JUNIOR THE THIRD - GHOST"

RONNIE

Rights my ass, you're dead!

BILLY JOE

Nuh uh! That's my body right there!

Billy Joe points at Camera Operator 1.

FRANK

(suspicious)  
Oh really...

(CONTINUED)



BILLY JOE  
Well...okay, it's my cousin's body,  
but he was lettin' me borrow it.

FRANK  
(to camera operator)  
Is that true?

Camera Operator 1 shakes his head.

BILLY JOE  
Oh that is bullshit! I'm alive!

RONNIE  
Well if you're alive, do you have  
any kind of ID on you?

BILLY JOE  
What the hell is this? A voting  
booth? I thought this was 'Merica!

FRANK  
C'mon now. Cough it up.

BILLY JOE  
Well...it's in my body.

FRANK  
And where's your body?

BILLY JOE  
My cousin has it.

Frank and Ronnie look at each other.

EXT. OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Frank and Ronnie drag the net containing Billy Joe out of  
the warehouse.

RONNIE  
You have now been exorcised! So go  
on. Git!

Billy Joe, looking sullen, is freed from the net.

BILLY JOE  
You know what? You know  
WHAT? Alive or not, I shouldn't be  
treated this way!

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Oh boy. Here we go.

BILLY JOE

I'm just like you, really! Look past the superficialities. If you prick me, do I not gloop? If you splash me with holy water, do I not smoke and dissipate? Come, my breathin' brothers, look deep into your hearts that pump strong with..uh...whatchamacallit...

RONNIE

Blood?

BILLY JOE

That's right, and see standin' before you a fellow supernatural aberration with all the hopes, dreams, aspirations, and desire to eternally walk the Earth just like you.

Frank and Ronnie have teared up a bit.

FRANK

Well...bless his heart. He just might have a point.

Ronnie points to the camera operator.

RONNIE

Yeah, maybe that is your body after all.

EDNA, a mid 30s white trash ghost, materializes. Her face has been pixelated in the "didn't sign a release form" style.

EDNA

Billy Joe, what the HELL are you doin' out of the afterlife?

BILLY JOE

Edna!

EDNA

We have been waitin' in line forever for them to call our number to cross over, and then you up and vanish, you asshole!

(CONTINUED)

RONNIE

Uh oh.

BILLY JOE

I don't--

EDNA

Mama called and she says it's bingo night in heaven. We can't miss bingo night! You disappointed Mama enough in life when I married you, lets not start again in death!

BILLY JOE

I ain't goin'!

EDNA

What?

FRANK

Ronnie, get ready.

BILLY JOE

I...I...I'm finally gonna say it. I'm finally gonna say it! I...don't care much for your mama.

Edna is initially shocked. With an angry cry, she launches herself at Billy Joe. A flurry of confusion follows as Ronnie tries to net Edna and Edna beats the crap out of Billy Joe.

FRANK

Looks like we got a domestic!

INT. EXTENDED CAB PICKUP TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Frank drives and Ronnie sits shotgun. Camera Operator 2 and Billy Joe sit in the back seat. In the truck bed, Edna sulks under a net.

FRANK

This sort of thing is just a fact of unlife. Seen it time and time again. We're gonna let Edna cool off for the night in our supernatural containment facility.

RONNIE

Yup, but I can guarantee we'll be back here in a week.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

That is the nature of the job. Hey  
Billy Joe, you comfortable back  
there.

BILLY JOE

Sure thing, Frank. Hey, you think  
it's too late for me to get a  
divorce?

FADE OUT