

SATAN AND DEATH
By Christopher Cody

FADE IN:

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF HELL.

SATAN is sitting at a desk, feet kicked up and resting on the desk, reading a newspaper and chuckling to himself. Through a large window behind him we can see Hell in all of its glory. Fire. Smoke. Brimstone. Starbucks franchises as far as the eye can see. SATAN is a cool reptile in a very warm place, basking in the glow of the evil that surrounds him. He has reached the top of his game.

There is a KNOCK on the door. It opens.

DEATH enters. He is dressed in black, with a hood and a scythe. He does not wait for Satan to acknowledge him, removes his coat, sets it aside, and sits down on the chair in front of Satan's desk. He looks weary.

SATAN:
(without looking up)
Good morning, Death.

DEATH
(grumbles)
Good morning, Satan. Hah! There's nothing good about it.

SATAN:
(sets his paper on the desk and grins)
Just watch. The stock market is going to drop a thousand points again. Soon it will be raining stock brokers. You like Wall Street, don't you?

DEATH

I suppose. We did that in 1929.

SATAN

Yeah. You gotta love the classics.

DEATH

(takes deep breath)

I don't suppose you've noticed, but I'm not happy in my work.

SATAN

You're not supposed to be happy. You're Death. The Grim Reaper.

The King of Terrors. The Bringer of Doom. King Death. Hell's

Grim Tyrant. The Curtain Closer.

DEATH

Curtain closer?

SATAN

Right. I just made that one up. How could you not be satisfied?

Everyone knows you. Everyone fears you. They doubt I exist. But they fear you.

DEATH

I don't want to be feared. I'm overworked. I never get any time off.

SATAN

Time off? You're too valuable to the way that Hell operates. If you took time off you'd be backed up for centuries. You'd have to put

in a lot of overtime. Remember the last time Death took a holiday?

There were old people everywhere. You know what old people

smell like. We had to start the Black Plague just to catch up.

DEATH

I'm thinking of changing careers.

SATAN

Changing careers? When did all this start?

DEATH

My therapist thinks it's a good idea. Something with less stress.

SATAN

When do you have time to see a therapist?

DEATH

Wednesday at 11 o'clock. I was hoping you wouldn't notice that no one dies on Wednesday between eleven and eleven fifty.

(beat)

Dr. Tushman says I'm making progress. He thinks it's the therapy.

I think it's the Prozac.

SATAN

Prozac? He's got you taking pills?

DEATH

I needed something for the anxiety.

SATAN

(incredulous)

What do you have to be anxious about? You're Death. You go out and turn out their lights and collect their souls. Half go upstairs and half come down here. Its so simple even a child could do it.

DEATH

You don't respect the work that I do. I show up and tap them on the shoulder. They clutch their chests and keel over. Dead. That's just what I was talking to Dr. Tushman about. Besides he says that my line of work is aggravating my passive aggressive nature.

SATAN

Passive aggressive? Does this quack know what he's talking about?

DEATH

Let's not make it about Dr. Tushman. This is about me and the job that I do. For you.

SATAN

I wasn't going to say anything, but you've been slipping up. How many times have I asked you to bring me the Queen?

DEATH

But I like Elton John's music.

SATAN

Not that Queen. The Queen of England.

DEATH

Can't you get someone else to do it? What about Disease. He'd love to take her.

SATAN

Sorry. Union rules. He can make her sick and she'd linger for, what, an eternity? Nope.

DEATH

How about the other Horsemen of the Apocalypse?

SATAN

Sorry. We got rid of the two of them in the last downsizing.

Famine started getting bulimic. Binging and purging. Binging and

purging. It was like hanging around a bunch of high school cheerleaders.

DEATH

I need some time off. If you don't give it to me, I'll go over your head.

SATAN

Over my head? To where?

DEATH

To God. He'll see that I'm right and he'll make you give me some time off.

SATAN laughs, slapping his knee.

SATAN

He can't make me. He rules Heaven and I rule Hell. Besides it was God that thought you up in the first place. Did I ever tell you the story of how you were born?

DEATH

No.

SATAN

What happens was, I was hanging out in the Garden of Eden. Adam was walking around naked. Big dumb stupid guy. A frat boy. All he did was eat and fart so God told him to name all of the animals just to give him something to do. He named a few Fred and one named Beverly and then he knocked off for the day. He told God that he was lonely. Can you believe it?

DEATH

What's so bad about that? I get lonely sometimes.

SATAN

Think about it. He's in the freakin' Garden of Eden. All of Creation in before him. The world is in harmony. No death. The lions are getting along with the lambs. The predators and prey were

hanging out in the basketball courts. Take it from me. White whales can't jump. Everything was great. But rather than tell Adam to grow up and appreciate all that's around him, God gives in to the whiny little bastard and decides to make woman. So he grabs one of Adam's ribs. Let me just stop and say that if God had used a better cut of meat, we might not have had any problems. Think what women would be like if they had been made of sirloin or porterhouse. Anyway, so God takes this rib and makes Eve.

DEATH

I thought this was about how I was born.

SATAN

Hold on. I'm getting there. So Eve shows up and she right away she's acting like every woman you've ever known. You ever notice a man buying a house and says, "This is perfect. I don't want it to change. Where do I put my toothbrush?" But a woman looks at the same house and already she has plans to bulldoze half of it and add a second story. Am I right?

DEATH shrugs.

SATAN

That's right. You don't date. One kiss from you and she's either moving in down here or picking out curtains upstairs. In any case, the fact that there's one tree that Eve can't eat from is driving her nuts. She can't stand it. Finally, I'm slithering through the Garden

one day and she asks me where the tree is. It was her idea, not mine, but I get blamed. I point my tail and the rest is history. She takes a bite and then gets the farting frat boy to take a bite, too. They both notice they're naked. Creation is upset. The lions are hungry and the sheep are nervous. That's when you show up. Death arrives. If this whole damned world is going to work, we need you. We need Death.

DEATH

You need me?

SATAN

Absolutely. You clear away the old and make way for the new. If it wasn't for Death, we'd still be up to our asses in dinosaurs. But not with you around. Boom. One comet and its over. I have to say that extinctions are some of your best work.

DEATH

(flattered)

I didn't think you noticed.

SATAN

Notice? Hell, I'm one of your biggest fans. Look, Death. I'll see what I can do. Tell you what. I was planning to start a big war this morning. Carnage. Blood. Lots of explosions. I'll make it a minor skirmish. You'll be done by lunch. Take the afternoon off. Catch a movie. By tomorrow you'll feel like a brand new demon.

DEATH rises from his chair and extends a bony hand to Satan. Satan almost shakes his hand, but pulls it away at the last minute. He gives Death a devilish grin. Death closes his open hand into the form of a gun and smiles.

DEATH

Almost got you. See you tomorrow.

DEATH leaves. SATAN settles back down at his desk and reopens his paper.

FADE OUT.

THE END