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Cockroach Nation
© Matt Pelfrey
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Man Measures Man

By David Robson

4 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: In the waning days of the Kosovo conflict, two American doctors travel to Macedonia to offer their services to Albanian refugees. Into the chaos of the medical camp, a mysterious boy arrives, forcing the doctors to re-examine their actions and the personal ethics that guide them.

The Sacred Geometry of S&M Porn

By Johnna Adams

16 actors playing various roles

Synopsis: A troubled young man with a stack of dirty magazines + a dead woman stealing souls + a televangelist grilled by Mike Wallace + a whore seeking enlightenment + a disgruntled woman wielding a gun = an assassination plot, weird sex, the Crystal Cathedral, a whole lotta money and a new religion.

COCKROACH NATION

By Matt Pelfrey

SAMPLE ONLY

CHARACTERS:

HANK - A Man in his mid to late forties.

MIRIAM - Hank's wife.

DEAN - Hank's step-son.

BOONE - An urban survivalist.

COCKROACH BOY - Late teens, early twenties.

SICK FUCK FRANK - 'Nuff said.

BETTY - A twisted old hag.

WOMAN - A homeless woman.

CRUTCHES - A homeless man.

SMOKE - A member of the working poor.

TRASH KING - An ancient homeless man

TRASH QUEEN - Literally made of trash.

SETTING - The dead-end of two impossibly long downtown alleys. A huge dumpster, heaps of refuse, trash and boxes. Drenched in graffiti.

First produced by Moving Arts, Los Angeles - 2000

COCKROACH NATION

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A SLIVER OF DINGY LIGHT RISES on a throne of trash. On it sits a man we'll just call the KING OF TRASH – he is so covered in filth and grime that we can't make out his race or his features.

A separate LIGHT RISES on large garbage bag. It moves. Something inside is ALIVE.

KING OF TRASH: When does it hit? The awareness? Eh? When does the time come when you realize everything you been led to believe as valuable and necessary can just be crumpled up, tossed aside, blown away in the wind?

(Beat)

I remember when it hit me.

(Beat)

When the landfill up here in my skull refused to hold even one more new thought or piece of everyday bullshit. When all the junk I was trying to shove inside my ears just wouldn't fit anymore.

A HAND tears out from the garbage bag.

KING OF TRASH: If there is one truth I know, it's this...

ANOTHER HAND rips out.

KING OF TRASH: The wrapper outlasts the burger...

A HEAD emerges through the torn plastic.

KING OF TRASH: The bottle outlasts the wine...

HANK, dressed in a business suit, pulls himself from the trash bag, like some new life-form emerging from a very strange womb.

KING OF TRASH: ...the can outlasts the coke...

Hank is now out of the bag, stands upright on shaking legs.

KING OF TRASH: The bones outlast the skin!!!

LIGHTS FADE on the King of Trash.

LIGHTS RISE on the dead end of an incredibly long alley. Garbage cans, trash bags, mounds of cardboard boxes, heaps and heaps of trash and a dumpster frothing with garbage dominate the area. Steam whispers up from a man-hole. Pipes jetting out of the walls drip strange liquids. It is a moist, dangerous environment.

A stage left and stage right alley feed into the dead end. It is night.

Hank goes to one of the cans, lifts it up, dumps the trash out, throws the can aside. He descends on the spilt garbage, sifts through it with his hands. He finds a can. He looks around, warily, then smashes it and puts it in his pocket. Keeps sifting, finds some more stuff, puts it in another pocket.

Finished with that, he scans the alley, sees a garbage bag that interests him, goes to it, rips it open. He hungrily digs through the contents, stops when he finds something. We

can't see exactly what it is, but he smells it, tastes it, then takes a bite and starts to chew.

He closes his eyes, relishing the taste, savoring it, then...

Suddenly, as if gaining his senses again, he YELLS, spits out whatever he was eating and staggers back, shocked at what he's done, falls to his knees and retches, dry heaving and holding his stomach.

HANK: ...uh...god...wha...what is this...? Uhg..no, no, no...
(He takes in the alley)

What the...?

(As if suddenly waking up)

...oh shit...

(Harsher, to himself)

Control, control, control...It's okay...

(Gets a hold of himself)

Miriam!

(He pats his jacket, feels for something)

Oh god, thank you!

(Pulls cellular phone from jacket)

Please...please be home...be home...Miriam? Shit!

(He gathers himself, steadies his voice)

Miriam...I...I don't know exactly where I am...I...I had another spell...I'm out here...well, I'm not sure where I am, but, I'll call once I get to a street...or someplace I recognize...I'm so so sorry...there's something wrong... whatever you want me to do, whoever you think I should see... I'll do it. I'm sorry for...for leaving a message like this but...I'll try again soon.

(Clicks the phone off)

Shit.

Hank moves towards the stage right alley. As he does, something rises up from the trash. It's a boy, in his teens,

dirt covered. He wears shorts that are just as filthy as his skin. In fact, you can't tell them apart. His arms and legs are bare. He has two mismatched tennis shoes and a pair of goggles over his eyes. When he talks it comes out as a strange "ticking" sound. This is COCKROACH BOY.

HANK: YAAAHHHOLYSHIT!!!!

COCKROACH BOY: Ticktictictictkktkkkkk!!!

HANK: Stay away!!

Cockroach Boy crawls towards Hank.

HANK: Don't come any closer!!

Hank looks around for a weapon. Picks up a metal pipe from the trash, holds it ready.

HANK: I'll hit you! Stay away!!

Hank backs up against the dumpster.

HANK: I mean it! Stop! Right there! YAH! GET!

BOONE RISES UP from the dumpster behind Hank, brings a cord around his neck, pulls it tight.

HANK: AAAAGGGKKKK!

Hank clutches at the cord, drops the pipe. Boone chokes Hank until he's gasping and then lets go.

Hank tumbles forward.

Boone jumps out from the dumpster, grabs Hank and throws him into one of the trash heaps.

BOONE: You FBI, ain't ya? Checkin' in with headquarters, weren't ya?

Boone reaches into Hank's jacket, takes out the cellular phone, throws it against the wall.

BOONE: Wanna find out about Trash Day? Not a chance!
I told you about Trash Day once and you all
LAUGHED IN MY FACE!

Boone pulls out a gun.

BOONE: On your knees! PRONTO!

Hank doesn't move. Boone hurls Hank to his knees, backs away.

BOONE: Know how many FBI punks they've sent after me so far? Mucho! And I've smoked every one of 'em!

HANK: I'm not with the FBI!!

BOONE: Thought you'd say that—

HANK: IT'S TRUE!!

Boone jams the gun against Hank's forehead.

BOONE: Give J. Edgar Hoover a big tongue kiss when you see him in hell!

HANK: NO!!

Hank scrambles away, cringes, holds up a sack of garbage in a pathetic attempt to ward off the bullet.

Boone and Cockroach Boy share a look.

BOONE: Never seen a Bureau boy cower like that.

HANK: I'm not with the FBI, GODDAMNIT!!

Boone looks over at Cockroach Boy again. Cockroach Boy shrugs.

BOONE: Wallet.

HANK: Take whatever you want -- have it all!

BOONE: Wallet! Now!

Hank reaches into his back pocket. Boone takes aim on Hank.

BOONE: Careful...

Hank pulls out his wallet, throws it to him. Boone picks it up, searches it.

BOONE: Huh.

Boone throws the wallet back at Hank.

BOONE: Who the hell are ya then?

HANK: Hank. My name...is Hank...okay?

BOONE: What're you doin' back here?

HANK: Don't even know where I am.

BOONE: Buying any of this crap, Cockroach Boy?

COCKROACH BOY: Ticktickticticktictickkkk!

HANK: It's the truth!

BOONE: This's the drain.

HANK: Doesn't help me much.

BOONE: It all ends up right here.

HANK: What does?

BOONE: You trollin' for trim?

HANK: Trolling...? No, no...I don't—

BOONE: Want someone to get freaky? Huh? Somethin' nasty the little woman won't do?

HANK: I -- I was at work...work! Some meeting...for what?

(Can't remember)

For what? Something important...It was...very... important.

BOONE: Don't give a shit. Either way –

HANK: *(Remembering)* The Ostrich McNuggets.

(Off Boone's look.)

I was meeting with my team...developing a campaign for the new brand of McNuggets... “A new day deserves a new kind of meat. Introducing the new McDonald’s Ostrich McNuggets.” ...Then...everything... just smeared...smeared together...

BOONE: Get your ass up.

HANK: Don't do anything...please I—

BOONE: See that alley? Go! Follow it to wherever the fuck you came from.

HANK: That'll take me back? To the street?

BOONE: I'm givin' you a chance here. Better take it.

Hank starts to move towards the stage right alley. Stops.

BOONE: Nah, don't stop! GET OUTTA HERE!

Boon chucks a hunk of trash at him. HANK EXITS.

BOONE: Poor bastard.

COCKROACH BOY: Ticktickticktickkk!

BOONE: Nothing we can do for 'im.

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkk! Tickk! Tickk!

BOONE: Hey, I ain't God, 'kay. I can't save everyone.
Call it compassion fatigue if ya want.

Cockroach Boy stares hard at Boone.

BOONE: No, no, no! Don't give me that look! We're gettin' outta here. Time to sequester.

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkkkkkk-tickkkk!

BOONE: Don't start...

COCKROACH BOY: Ttiticktick!

BOONE: Wrong! He's just like all the rest!

COCKROACH BOY: Tticktitick!

BOONE: You don't know that!

COCKROACH BOY: Tick, tittick!

BOONE: You're reachin', you're really reachin' now CB!

COCKROACH BOY: Tititkc!

BOONE: He's not! Squash that shit!

Boone reaches into the dumpster, pulls out a big, hiker-style back pack. It is full of stuff carefully tied-in and organized.

COCKROACH BOY: Ttitckckctick?

BOONE: No time to get laid. Y'nabbed a piece last week.

Cockroach Boy grabs a bag of trash and dry humps it for a second, grinning enthusiastically, nodding to Boone.

BOONE: Damn, you're just full of opinions and demands tonight. What more you want from me? Huh?

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkk!

BOONE: It's gonna happen any day now! Let's hit the bunker and wait it out! We gotta stick to the plan!

Cockroach Boy shakes his head "no."

BOONE: You're bein' el stupido.

COCKROACH BOY: Tickk! Tickk!

Boone takes a deep breath. Cockroach Boy grabs his groin.

BOONE: She's not in love with you! She was a crack whore! She'd fuck a dead dog for a dollar fifty! Which is fifty cents less than I paid her to fuck you!

Cockroach Boy strokes the bag of trash tenderly.

BOONE: We all want love, kiddo. But that doesn't mean we all get love. Comprende?

Cockroach Boy SCREAMS, starts slamming the garbage bag onto the ground in a rage.

BOONE: No more tantrums! STOP THAT!

Cockroach Boy throws the bag of trash aside.

BOONE: I'll leave your ass here. Serious. Don't wanna. You're my best pal, like Robin and Tonto put in one feisty little package, but if push comes to shove, nobody shoves harder than me.

Cockroach Boy senses something, dives into a pile of trash, disappears.

Boone pulls his gun as Hank ENTERS.

BOONE: Told you to beat it.

HANK: Every step I took—

BOONE: Hey!

HANK: It felt wrong! I couldn't—

BOONE: Just go! Lucky I haven't capped your ass yet!

HANK: Like I was stepping into a lie...

BOONE: C'mon...

HANK: ...was feeling nauseous...

BOONE: It's the smell back here, now—

HANK: I threw up.

BOONE: You get a gold star—

HANK: When I did, swear to Christ, garbage came out.

BOONE: Don't wanna hear this...

HANK: Old coffee grounds!

BOONE: Shut up!

HANK: A Starbucks cup!

BOONE: Alright...!

HANK: Wadded up napkins!

BOONE: Enough!

HANK: A can of Bud Lite...

(Beat)

I don't even drink Bud Lite!

BOONE: Hey, see a doctor! Maybe it's some new kind of bird flu thing!

HANK: When you were ranting at me...waving that gun...you mentioned Trash Day.

Slight pause.

BOONE: So fuckin' what?

HANK: Every night this week, I've been sleep-walking...My wife finds me by the curb with our cans mumbling "Trash Day is coming. Trash Day is coming. It's time to take out the trash."

(Beat)

In my dreams -- I've seen cities built on continents of garbage! Endless landscapes of refuse and junk! I've been getting these... impulses...what the hell's happening to me?

BOONE: Hey, sorry, but—

HANK: I heard you. You said it...

BOONE: Don't matter what I said.

HANK: I'M LOSING MY FUCKING MIND!! Going crazy! You know! I can see it! IN YOUR EYES! You got to help me!

BOONE: I don't gotta do shit! This isn't Bullshit Incorporated! I don't work for you! Back here...this is my office. And you don't come into my office demanding shit!

HANK: Then shoot me! "Cap me!" Whatever. I don't care!

Hank reaches for Boone's gun.

BOONE: Hey!

Boone draws on Hank.

HANK: Yes. There you go...Do it! Put me down. I can't go on like this. I'm deteriorating...

BOONE: *(Lowers his gun)* You're too late.

HANK: For what?

BOONE: Everything.

Hank looks at Boone. Doesn't understand.

BOONE: Trash Day. It's imminent. Nothin' you can do.

HANK: Don't even know what this Trash Day's supposed to be.

BOONE: Wouldn't be here if you didn't. Just buried.
(Tapping his skull)

In here. Trust me.

HANK: Why can't you explain--?

BOONE: Do yourself a favor. Go back to the Great Lie. Pretend everything's fine. Watch your flat screen, go to your little job, n'when Trash Day hits, pray you're killed instantly.

(To Cockroach Boy)

CB! Let's go!

Cockroach Boy sticks his head out from under the trash.

COCKROACH BOY: Tictictick!

BOONE: No.

COCKROACH BOY: Ticktickticktick!

BOONE: No fuckin' way.

COCKROACH BOY: TICKKTICKKKK!!

BOONE: Come out, right goddamn now. We're going!
Fuckin' pronto!

COCKROACH BOY: *(Vehemently)* TITTITITITITTI-
CICICTITTICKCCTITITCICK!

HANK: What's he saying!!

COCKROACH BOY: Tittititckkkkk!

HANK: Tell me!

Boone glares at Cockroach Boy, takes a breath, looks over at Hank.

BOONE: Says you may be different than the rest.

HANK: The rest? What, there's others?

BOONE: Got a Priest once. A cop. This really annoying
chiropractor.

HANK: Wait -- Can I talk to them?

Boone shakes his head.

HANK: Maybe they could tell me what—

BOONE: Ain't gonna tell you shit.

HANK: Why...not?

Boone doesn't speak. Just looks at Hank, searching for something in his face, eyes, being...

HANK: Where are they?

BOONE: Broken. Cracked. Twisted. Couldn't handle it.
When they saw what was comin', they fell apart.

(To Cockroach Boy)

Just like he's gonna.

(To Hank)

Here's the bottom line: I think CB's ass-wrong about you...

COCKROACH BOY: Titictictick!!

BOONE: *(Ignoring CB)* You're just like the others. Another piece a' human garbage that got hosed off the sidewalk and ended up here.

COCKROACH BOY: Titcktictick! Ticktu!

BOONE: You don't know! You're just guessing!

COCKROACH BOY: Tickticktitick!

BOONE: Bullshit, Roach! You said that about the last one!

COCKROACH BOY: Ticktitick!

HANK: Give me a chance. I just want to understand...

BOONE: Question: I show up at your house. You don't know me, never seen me before, but I show up - knock knock knock - there I am askin' for a hand.

(Beat)

Look at me.

(Beat)

Would you help? Would you even unchain the door?

(Pause)

Didn't think so.

HANK: Listen, I'm sorry, I don't even know your name...

BOONE: Boone.

HANK: As in Daniel?

BOONE: As in you're close to getting your ass kicked!

HANK: Okay, hold on...Mr. Boone? I didn't mean—

BOONE: Just Boone.

HANK: Right. Fine. Boone.

(Beat)

I'm not demanding you do anything for me. Okay? I'm just asking...for a little bit of what you know. Your knowledge. If I'm not just... completely insane...having a breakdown...if there's more to these feelings...and sick urges I'm having...if you know something about this...Trash Day...as you seem to...educate me.

(Beat)

Pass some of your knowledge to me...your insight...help me. I'm broken. An appliance that just doesn't work anymore.

(Beat)

Please.

Long pause.

BOONE: Then what?

(Beat)

What do I get helping you?

COCKROACH BOY: Titictictick! Ticktitick!

BOONE: Shut up!

COCKROACH BOY: Tititick, tick - tick, titick!

BOONE: Keep pushin' me, Roach! Keep pushin'!

(To Hank)

I asked you a question!

HANK: How can I answer that? You get the -- I don't know -- You're helping your fellow man!

BOONE: Right, right. My "fellow man," we're always helping each other out, aren't we?

HANK: That what this is about? Payback time?

BOONE: If "payback" was on my fuckin' agenda, you'd be laying in that dumpster, wondering what the fuck happened, waiting to die.

HANK: *(Under his breath)* Wouldn't be the first time...

BOONE: (*Hasn't heard Hank*) Sick a' this shit. CB, your call on this punk was wrong. He's got nothin'. He is nothin'. Your senses are turnin' to shit.

Boone turns to leave. Cockroach Boy points to Hank.

COCKROACH BOY: TICKTITICTCKICK! TICKTICK-TITCK!

BOONE: Let's move!

COCKROACH BOY: TICK!TICKTICK! TICK!

BOONE: He said wha-?

COCKROACH BOY: Tictick...

Cockroach Boy scurries up to Boone, gestures at Hank wildly.

BOONE: (*Moving back to Hank*) Just now. What did you say?

HANK: It wouldn't be the first time.

BOONE: For?

HANK: Being left to die in one of those things.

BOONE: Talk.

HANK: What's the—

BOONE: Talk!

HANK: As a baby...that's how I was found...My...whoever, left me... wrapped in newspapers... in a dumpster.

BOONE: You lying, I'll gut you.

HANK: A vagrant found me...took me in for a deposit with his bottles and cans...if not, I'd probably be dead.

Cockroach Boy jumps up and down, accepts the adoration of an invisible crowd only he can hear.

HANK: After that, I was put up for adoption.

COCKROACH BOY: Titick! Tictitick!

BOONE: *(To Cockroach Boy)* Maybe, maybe not!

COCKROACH BOY: Titick!

BOONE: Roach, what do you know about it? People throw babies out all the time. If you could read you'd know that.

(re: one of the many newspapers on the ground)

Every other article: "Baby found abandoned." "Couple throw infant in dumpster." It's a national pastime!

COCKROACH BOY: Tititick! Tictitckctitck!

HANK: What's he saying? What's he so excited about?

Boone goes to a pile of junk heaped against one of the walls, pulls down some cardboard boxes and a soiled mattress. Spray-painted on the wall in dripping letters are the words "FROM THE DUMPSTER WILL RISE A KING."

HANK: He thinks that's me?

COCKROACH BOY: Titck Ticktick!

BOONE: He don't know what to think!

But obviously, finally, neither does Boone. He looks at Hank, trying to size him up, trying to see if he's missed something.

BOONE: Maybe you're special. Maybe you're not. Hell, I'm gettin' old, I don't know anymore.

(Beat)

Shut your eyes.

HANK: Why?

BOONE: I said so.

Hank shuts his eyes.

BOONE: *(Slowly)* Listen to your breath...your heart beating...feel your blood gashin' around...listen to what each cell is whisperin'.

(Beat)

Listen...

Hank does.

BOONE: What's your body tellin' you about Trash Day?

HANK: *(Eyes shut)* The garbage we've tried to bury will rise...

BOONE: Dig...

HANK: *(Eyes shut)* The wrapper outlasts the burger.

BOONE: Burrow down...

HANK: *(Eyes shut)* The bottle outlasts the wine.

BOONE: More...

HANK: *(Eyes shut)* The can outlasts the coke.
(Beat)

The bones outlast the skin.

Boone and Cockroach Boy exchange a look.

BOONE: That's right.

(Beat)

I...that's exactly it.

(Nods to himself, clearly surprised)

I'm impressed.

Hank opens his eyes, seems even more shaken.

HANK: Trash Day. It's the end, isn't it?

BOONE: Not even close.

HANK: Then--?

BOONE: We're not gonna get put out of our misery. We're gonna have to deal with what we've done to this world. Gonna have our faces shoved right there in it.

(Beat)

It's happened before.

HANK: What do you mean?

BOONE: Before there was an America on this continent. Things looked different...until Trash Day hit for my ancestors. I'm sure they wished it was the end.

(Off Hank's look)

One-fourth Cherokee, my mother's side...

(Beat)

The trash washed up on the shores. Destroyed the land.

Made the streams into sewers. The sky into shit.

(Beat)

An entire culture thrown away...

HANK: How long do we have?

BOONE: A day? Week? Month at the outside.

HANK: Can we stop it? Something we can do to prevent it from—

BOONE: --How are we gonna start cleaning up now?

Huh? When there's trash in the molecules? In the sky?

The soil, our blood, our cum, our minds?

(Beat)

Best I can do is give you some basic survival skills. If you're special, not another pretender, it should be enough to get you through.

HANK: That's all I can ask for.

BOONE: Sure you wanna do this?

HANK: Don't have a choice.

BOONE: Not promising you shit.

HANK: I understand.

BOONE: Fine. Start by hustlin' up some grub. Don't know about you, but I'm gettin' hungry.

HANK: Not going to eat trash again, am I? I've only done that when I'm in this..."state", this dream-like...sleep-walking kind-of-thing...

BOONE: It's an acquired taste, I'll admit...and you'll be gettin' used to it soon enough. This alley is teemin' with edibles. Lot's to choose from.

HANK: *(Somewhat warily)* Okay...

BOONE: I'm gettin' kinda sick of pigeon, kinda maxed out on our feathered friends...

(Considers his options)

Today, I'm thinkin' something more along the lines of "ratus delicti."

HANK: Oh, no...

BOONE: Also known in some parts of the world as "bandicoots."

HANK: You expect me to eat a rat?

BOONE: It's meat. Real food for real people!

HANK: No way.

BOONE: Think you're gonna order one of your "McNugget" things after Trash Day hits?

HANK: But eating a rat?

BOONE: This ain't up for debate. Nobody said "From Beverly Hills will rise a king?" Huh? "From Wallstreet will rise a king?" No. FROM A DUMPSTER WILL RISE A KING. Comprende, amigo?

(Beat)

Hey, this is the easy stuff. You can't find your stones here, you sure as hell won't handle anything else.

HANK: You mentioned pigeons. Why not start there?
Still rather...uh...

(Queasy from the idea)

...but at least they're birds.

(Beat)

That makes sense, doesn't it?

BOONE: Do I look like someone you can fuck with?

Hank shakes his head.

Boone takes a big scary knife from inside his boot, throws it on the ground in front of Hank.

HANK: Okay, what's this?

BOONE: Pick it up.

HANK: Why?

BOONE: Do it, or I will.

HANK: You sound mad.

BOONE: Grab the knife.

HANK: Look Boone, I'm not trying to push any buttons here, it's just that—

BOONE: Pick up the knife.

Hank does.

BOONE: Now. Come after me.

HANK: Let's be nice.

BOONE: Do it.

HANK: I'm not gonna -- no!

BOONE: You nick me, scratch me, draw the slightest drop of blood, we eat pigeon. Otherwise, you eat rat, tail 'n all.

HANK: I don't want to hurt you.

BOONE: There's a lot of stuff you're not gonna wanna do.

HANK: If I cut you, what're you gonna do to me?

BOONE: You won't cut me.

HANK: But if I do.

BOONE: Not gonna say it again.

HANK: Alright, alright...

Hank holds the knife in a fist, blade down. He approaches Boone.

HANK: Ready?

Boone just stands there. Hank makes an awkward slash at Boone. Boone effortlessly knocks the knife out of his hand and throws Hank to the ground.

Hank collects himself.

HANK: That hurt.

BOONE: I can make it a lot worse.

HANK: I believe you.

BOONE: Ready to put the meat on the sandwich?

Hank nods. Boone helps him up.

Boone goes to his pack, pulls out two sticks, screws them together. It's a pool cue. Boone then takes a metal point, crudely made from some hunk of broken machinery or something, and attaches it to the end of the cue -- instant spear.

BOONE: Get busy.

Hank takes the spear. Starts searching around the trash heaps for rats.

BOONE: Better be right about this.

COCKROACH BOY: Titick, tick...tick!

Hank sees something, throws the spear. Goes over to check... missed.

HANK: This isn't going to be easy.

Boone goes to the junk heap and finds a rusty barrel, drags it to the center of the alley. Then he goes to the trash heap, starts sifting around, picking up other sacks, sifting through stuff, smelling, feeling, sensing...finally, after careful deliberation, he carries an arm load of junk and garbage, goes to the barrel, drops it in.

Hank pokes around with his spear, searching for prey. He's not having much luck, so he starts watching what Boone is up to.

HANK: What's that supposed to do?

BOONE: We're making an offering.

HANK: To who?

A NOISE from the stage right alley. Hank notices.

HANK: *(Warning)* Boone...

Boone looks, he takes his gun out and peers into the darkness.

BOONE: Hey! Come outta there! Slow!

A HOMELESS WOMAN carrying a sack steps from the shadows of the alley. She's hesitant, skittish, almost seems too fragile to be out in this environment.

WOMAN: Sun-dried raisins...

BOONE: What're you doing? Creepin' around? Slinkin' in the shadows?

WOMAN: The sun is pissed...

BOONE: Answer me!

HANK: Easy, Boone...

BOONE: You got five seconds t'start flappin' your gums...

WOMAN: (*Pleading*) Darkness. Rain. Cuts on my finger tips.

BOONE: Yeah...?

WOMAN: (*Nodding*) G.I. Joe's MIA. Raggedy Ann on her first period. She cries toxic mud.

BOONE: Uh-huh.

WOMAN: (*Passionately relating a story*) The sky melted and the flood was on! No boats! Fuzzer a no show. The milk cartons cried out his name! Desperate, you see?

BOONE: Fuckin' nut case. Clear outta here, now. Move it along.

Boone gives her a firm push. The Woman slaps his arm away.

WOMAN: (*Defiantly*) Screech to a halt Sudden stop!
(*Forcefully arguing now:*) Oven mittens! Swallowing me up. Wandering for days in a plastic universe. Strange faces oozing sewage...

BOONE: Hey, tough world, honey...

WOMAN: G.I. Joe being tortured by the Vietcong. Barbie raped. Ken castrated. Raggedy Ann crying for mom. I can't comfort my little Raggedy Ann. My little G.I. Joe...

BOONE: Well he ain't here!

WOMAN: Disposable lives. Children being traded in for better models. The rest of us go hungry. The rest of us are hunger.

HANK: Boone...what?

BOONE: She says she lost her son about five years ago. Shopping for oven mittens at the Beverly Center. Left her boy in the Toys R' Us, when she came back he was gone. Never found him.

HANK: Jesus Christ.

BOONE: She's convinced someone turned her little boy, Jeremy, into a doll, took him away to be in someone else's toy collection. She figures, whatever little kid got her son as a gift probably's out grown him by now. Been thrown away.

The Woman takes the sack from over her shoulder and dumps out the contents: a bunch of dolls. All different kinds.

BOONE: No, no, no!! Don't spill all that...shit...makin' a mess here lady...

WOMAN: Milk Duds. The kind that makes the cats go crazy?

BOONE: No dice. Scoop 'em up.

WOMAN: *(Pleading)* Soggy heart!!!

BOONE: Fuck no! You're not going through my trash!

HANK: Why can't she—

BOONE: We got training to do!

HANK: She won't get in the way.

BOONE: She's already in the way! We're spending time talking about her! That makes her in the goddamn way!!!

HANK: She's harmless. Let her do her thing.

WOMAN: (*Grateful*) Coors in your veins. Budwiser in your soul.

The Woman climbs into the dumpster.

BOONE: Hey, I didn't say you could...fuck it.

Boone shakes his head, getting progressively more annoyed with the direction things are taking. He pulls an empty baggy from his pocket, finds some more trash that seems to be special, rips it into small pieces, places it in the baggy.

HANK: You know, Boone, I've, ah, been thinking...about my family...and how it might be a good idea for me to warn them or -- you know, about... about all this shit that's gonna happ—

BOONE: Oh, no, no, no -- don't even think about it.

HANK: No, to just get them down here and train and maybe prepare for—

BOONE: Wrong move, bucko!

HANK: Why?

BOONE: It's useless!

HANK: How can you say that? We're talking about my flesh and blood...

BOONE: ...and they won't believe you.

HANK: Of course they will. My wife...my stepson...they'll trust me...

BOONE: Think I didn't try to convince people?

(Beat)

My little brother, my sister...my fiance... or maybe the world loves you more than me...I'm nothing. You're the exception?

(Beat)

You're not. I'm not gonna let you waste time on that shit.

HANK: It's not a waste if I can save them. I can go to the street, try a pay-phone.

BOONE: Fuck no!

HANK: What am I supposed to do? Let them stay out there and get killed when it all collapses?

BOONE: Think of it as recycling.

HANK: I've gotta call them. I can leave them directions so they can join us. We can all train and—

BOONE: DON'T! Goddamn it, will you listen for a fuckin' second? They're already dead. They're just too stupid to know it.

The Woman lets out a SHOUT, backs away from something.

WOMAN: Demonic trash!

BOONE: Probably Cockroach Boy.

HANK: What?

BOONE: Something moved. Don't pay her any mind.

Cockroach Boy crawls out from a trash heap on the other side of the alley.

WOMAN: Captain Crunch on my hit-list!

BOONE: Probably a rat.

(To Hank)

Which you should be hunting.

WOMAN: Lettuce gone bad. The cake won't rise.

The Woman climbs down from the dumpster, goes to her dolls, starts collecting them up.

HANK: You're leaving already?

WOMAN: All lava cools.

BOONE: Get hunting!

HANK: Alright!

Hank starts hunting again.

BOONE: How ya feelin' Roachie?

Cockroach Boy doesn't respond. He's staring at the Woman. Boone follows his gaze.

BOONE: Don't get started.

Cockroach Boy crawls over to the Woman as she puts her dolls away. The Woman notices him.

Cockroach Boy smiles his bad teeth smile.

The Woman stops, looks at Cockroach Boy. Cockroach Boy helps her with the dolls.

BOONE: Don't get your dick hard, Roach. You ain't performing a love act with her. Don't even think about it.

HANK: Cut him some slack.

BOONE: Just worry about chow.

The Woman reaches out towards Cockroach Boy and takes off his goggles. Stares into his eyes.

BOONE: Shitfire...

Boone shakes his head with disgust and crosses back to his trash project. He takes the scraps of paper he's collected in the baggy and starts shredding them into smaller bits. There's something ritualistic about his precision and care.

Hank sees something, throws his spear behind a bunch of junk. Runs after it. Boone looks over.

HANK: YES!!

Hank holds up his spear -- he's skewered a rat.

BOONE: Nice goddamn shot! Bring that juicy bad-boy here.

Hank brings the skewered rat to Boone, who inspects it, nodding.

WOMAN: *(To Cockroach Boy)* My milk carton...

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkkk...tick...tick....

WOMAN: Face. Three eyes. Four mouths.

Cockroach Boy makes kissing noises at the Woman.

WOMAN: Ice cream. Sunday. Wearing white?

COCKROACH BOY: *(Nodding)* Tickkkk...

WOMAN: *(To Boone)* These shoes. Are they a brand name?

BOONE: None of your business!

WOMAN: *(Pointing at Cockroach Boy)* My milk carton.

BOONE: He ain't your boy.

WOMAN: MY MILK CARTON!!

BOONE: Roach's been out here since the day he was born. Not wandering around some goddamn toy store!

WOMAN: *(Nodding, very sure)* My milk carton. Face, yes. Eyes, yes.

BOONE: You get outta here!

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkkkk! Tickkk!

BOONE: Oh, shut up.

WOMAN: Simple math. Not the new stuff. Easy to understand.

BOONE: He wants to bump uglies with you is what he wants. I should never have gotten him laid. Been useless ever since.

WOMAN: *(To Cockroach Boy)* Play dolls with me.

BOONE: I said get the fuck outta here!

WOMAN: *(Angrily at Boone)* Disappear! Disposal! Disgust!

Boone walks over, grabs the woman by her arm, hauls her to her feet.

BOONE: Take your dolls and get lost.

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkk! TIICKKK!

BOONE: What?

COCKROACH BOY: Tiick! Tiiiick!

BOONE: Once we survive Trash Day you can dip your little wick.

Boone shoves the Woman towards the stage left alley.

BOONE: GO!!

WOMAN: (*Looking towards Cockroach Boy*) Join my photo album! The pictures will sing! Jeremy!

BOONE: That's not his name!

WOMAN: Mommy is nice. Feel good time.

COCKROACH BOY: TIIICKKK!

Cockroach Boy starts to crawl towards the Woman.

BOONE: What is this? You're going off with her? Some skanky piece of tail you don't even know? Some piece a' street-meat?

Cockroach Boy stops.

COCKROACH BOY: Tickkkk! Tickkk! Tickk!

BOONE: Love? How can you be in love? YOU'RE COCKROACH BOY!! You were RAISED BY ROACHES!! Roaches don't know what love is!!!

WOMAN: Jeremy! We will dance among the coffee grounds!

BOONE: You shut the fuck up! I've known this kid for a long time. I've taken care of him! You just walk in here and shake your ass and take him away from me? This kid is my family!

WOMAN: My milk carton! MINE!

HANK: (*Finally butting in*) I think the choice should be CB's.

BOONE: (*Glares at Hank*) He's not smart enough to make a choice on his own! And you stay out of this! Wasn't for you, me 'n Roach would be sequestered right now!

WOMAN: Milk carton love...milk carton tears...

Cockroach Boy continues his crawl towards the Woman.

BOONE: Oh no you don't! NO NO NO! Fuck no!

Boone rushes to the Woman, grabs her, drags her to the stage left alley and throws her down the alley. The Woman IS GONE.

HANK: Hey, easy Boone—

BOONE: Last warning! Keep out of this!

He storms back to the remaining dolls, scoops most of them up, rushes back to the alley entrance and heaves them after her.

BOONE: (*Shouting after her*) And don't you ever fuckin' come back here!

Cockroach Boy buries his face in some garbage, wails like a baby.

BOONE: Aw, for fuck's sake, what is this? Our reality's about to get double bagged and left on the curb and you're worrying about 'tang? Get your priorities straight.

Cockroach Boy throws a bag of trash at Boone, then goes into the shadows to brood.

HANK: He gonna be okay?

BOONE: Shit, he'll forget about this the second he sees what I've got planned.

HANK: You were kinda rough with her...

BOONE: I treated her with kid gloves. 'Just shows how out of touch you are with the Way Things Will Be.

Pause.

HANK: What about the rat?

BOONE: We'll get to him. I didn't think you'd manage to bag one so quick. Fuckin' kudes.

HANK: Thanks.

BOONE: Don't thank me. Anything that ends up between us, good or bad, ain't personal. Unlike most people on this planet, I got a code I stick by. I see myself as being a part of the bigger picture.

(Beat)

Truth is, I don't really like you. You rub me the wrong way.

(Beat)

But if nature, or some power, or whatever, if somehow you were meant to be a part of the world after Trash Day, then I have an obligation to do what I can for you.

HANK: Well, I mean it...all things considered...thank you.

BOONE: Stop sayin' that. Because you gotta know, if you can't hack this next step, it's as far as we go.

HANK: I'll hack it.

BOONE: We'll see.
(Throws Hank a lighter)
Take this....
(Nods to the rusty can)
Light it.

Hank lights the garbage can. It glows from the flames within.

Boone takes a pipe from his pocket.

HANK: I don't smoke.

BOONE: You do now.

HANK: This isn't some drug thing, is it?

BOONE: We're clearing the garbage and letting the soul rise.

HANK: Sounds strange...

BOONE: You ain't seen nothing yet. Let's smoke a bowl!

HANK: What about CB?

BOONE: Right, thanks.
(Shouts over towards wherever Cockroach Boy is sulking)
Come on, CB! Time to scorch a fatty.

Cockroach Boy comes out from his hiding place, joins them.

Boone fills the pipe, throws the baggy of trash to Cockroach Boy along with some rolling papers.

BOONE: CB rolls his own.

HANK: Ah.

Cockroach Boy starts making himself a trash joint. Boone lights his pipe, takes a hit, nods, hands it to Hank.

Hank takes a tentative toke. Coughs. Takes another hit...tries to hold the smoke in but coughs again. Boone takes the pipe away, takes another good hit, hands the pipe back to Hank.

Hank takes another puff, tries to hold more smoke in this time. A partial success.

Cockroach Boy lights his, takes a deep hit.

LIGHTS CHANGE. Things look weirder. The flaming trash can flickers, throwing strange shadows all around the alley.

LIGHTS TIGHTEN on Boone, Hank, Cockroach Boy, and the trash can.

BOONE: How you feelin'?

HANK: I'm not sure....weird...this is very weird...

COCKROACH BOY: Yeah it is.

Hank looks at Cockroach Boy in shock.

HANK: You can talk? You speak English?

COCKROACH BOY: Not a word. Right now, you speakin' roach!

HANK: God, my head feels like it's gonna implode.

BOONE: Go with it.

Hank gets to his feet, very shaky, drops the pipe and lighter. He leans against a wall, looks like he's going to throw up.

Boone and Cockroach Boy disappear in the darkness.

The trash can glows brighter. Something moves in the dumpster, followed by strange, eerie, metallic noises. Voices? Crying? A baby?

Hank, fighting his fear, moves closer to the dumpster.

The noises get louder. The dumpster vibrates.

Hank climbs up and peers into the dumpster.

The strange noises/voices/sounds get louder.

HANDS MADE OF GARBAGE reach out from the dumpster, try to pull him in.

Hank screams and flings himself away, falls to the ground.

HANK: *(Whimpering, afraid) ...stay away...stay the hell away...please...*

The hands REACH OUT, some beckon him, urging him to join them in the dumpster.

Hank freaks, hides under some cardboard and trash.

LIGHTS TIGHTEN on the dumpster. The strange noises reach a pitch then cut out abruptly, ECHOING into the night as LIGHTS FADE.