

"FAANS"

by

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(FADE IN TRACKING ECU MAID. Slow ZOOM OUT to MS, establishing that MAID is pushing cleaning cart down hotel hallway. She pauses, glancing to her side. CUT TO ECU "Maid Service Requested" card hanging on doorknob. CUT TO TRACKING MS MAID as she resumes pushing cart. After a few paces, she pauses again, glancing at another door. CUT TO ECU another "Maid Service Requested" card. CUT TO TRACKING MS MAID as she resumes pushing cart. She pauses again and looks at yet another door. CUT TO ECU "Do Not Disturb" sign on doorknob. CUT TO MS MAID as she takes a few towels off cart and gets out her passkey. PAN to follow MAID as she approaches door and inserts key. CUT TO MLS door from inside room as it opens and MAID steps inside. FADE IN theme music, softly.)

MAID: Maid service!

(CUT TO MLS PAN of room. Beds are in disarray. No one is there. CUT TO MS MAID as she shrugs and turns toward bathroom. CUT TO MS doorway from inside bathroom as MAID enters and turns on the light. She glances down to one side. Quick PAN to MS body in bathtub. Tub is filled with what looks like green slime. MAID screams. Quick PAN to MAID as she screams again and dashes from bathroom. CUT TO MLS door to room as seen from hall. MAID runs out and collides with camera. Theme music has risen in tempo and volume.)

MAID: Get out of my way!

(PAN to follow MAID as she runs down hall, away from camera. Ominous Propellor Beanie /OPB/ glides into lower foreground and hovers as KEY IN TC "Spare Chaynge Presents." KEY OUT TC as OPB drifts off camera. CUT TO MS body in bathtub and KEY IN TC "Faans." KEY OUT TC and CUT TO shots of various con activities. KEY IN and OUT remaining opening credits TCs. As TCs end, FADE OUT theme music.

(CUT TO LS hotel hall as MAID runs toward camera. PAN to follow MAID as she rushes past, entering lobby. ~~She runs up to desk.~~ Standing nearby are JOHN Q. MUNDANE and JOE FANN. CUT TO TWOSHOT MUNDANE and MAID.)

MAID: Help! Murder! Monsters! Aaarrrgh! It was all green and slimy! And it was just lying there! Somebody do something! Scream! Shriek!

MUNDANE: Hey, what is all this? What's going on?

MAID: Do something! Murder! Martians! Shriek!

MUNDANE: (grabbing MAID by shoulders and shaking her) Stop it! What are you babbling about?

MAID: Shriek! Murder! It's disgusting! And who's going to clean up that bathtub? Not me! Oh, no!

(CUT TO OTS MS of MUNDANE facing MAID. MUNDANE slaps MAID. She sobers up immediately, stares at him for a beat, then punches him in the face. PAN and TILT to follow MUNDANE as he falls to the floor. He shakes his head, then begins to stand up. CUT TO TWOSHOT as MUNDANE stands, rubbing his jaw.)

MUNDANE: All right. That's more like it. Now, can you tell me exactly what's going on?

MAID: Who are you?

AS-TO-A-FOOL =  
MUNDANE: I'm Mundane. John Q. Mundane, the hotel detective.

MAID: Oh, of course. I should have recognized you, what with the three-piece suit and elevator shoes.

M.A.G.  
MUNDANE: (glancing down briefly) What elevator shoes? I just have very thick feet. But never mind that. What's all this screaming and babbling about?

MAID: About? What's it about? I'll tell you what's it about, Mr. Three-piece-suit-with-the-thick-feet. I just found a body in a bathtub, that's what's it about!

So? you saw someone  
MUNDANE: I see. A body in a bathtub. Did you notice anything unusual about it?

MAID: Unusual? Well, it was naked, and female and, oh yes, it was covered with green slime. Nothing unusual. Just your typical, naked, slime covered body in a bathtub!

(INSERT MCU JOE FANN as MAID mentions green slime. FANN raises his eyebrows and nods his head knowingly. END INSERT as MUNDANE speaks.)

MUNDANE: All right. Keep quiet, will you? We don't want to alarm our guests.

MAID: Oh, no? It was probably one of our guests that put it there! Yeah, probably one of those weirdo sci-fi nuts! The hotel is crawling with them! Yecch! Perverts!

(ZOOM OUT to THREESHOT as JOE FANN approaches MUNDANE and MAID.)

JOE FANN: Excuse me, but I couldn't help but overhear - -

MUNDANE: Who are you?

JOE FANN: Joe Fann. I'm with the con -- you know, the science fiction convention.

MUNDANE: Oh? Do you know anything about this -- situation -- we seem to have?

(ZOOM IN TWOSHOT JOE FANN and MUNDANE.)

JOE FANN: No, but I may be able to help. The incident in question sounds like something very fannish.

MUNDANE: And I suppose you're an expert?

JOE FANN: Me? Little old me? Nawww, I'm really just a neo. But I think that I can find someone for you who is an expert on fandom.

MUNDANE: Phantom? What phantom?

JOE FANN: No, no. Fandom. That is, having to do with science fiction fans. You wait right here and I'll send him to you. You know, those are really nifty shoes.

(ZOOM OUT TO LS as JOE FANN exits. CUT TO LS hotel hallway. Begin "Washington and Lee Swing", Uncle Albert's theme music, as figure enters foreground and walks down hall away from camera. TRACK TO FOLLOW figure at MLS. The figure is wearing a short grey lab coat and an engineer's hat. He skips a step every so often, as though trying to remain in step with the music, or perhaps he's trying to match his stride to that of an invisible companion. END TRACKING just before figure reaches a "T" in the hallway. Figure disappears around corner to right. A beat, then figure reappears, crossing to left. CUT TO LS lobby. MUNDANE is standing at desk, facing away from the camera. UNCLE ALBERT enters and walks up to MUNDANE. CUT TO MS MUNDANE's back as UNCLE ALBERT taps him on the shoulder. MUNDANE turns and an expression of disbelief registers on his face. FADE OUT UA theme music.)

MUNDANE: Yes? What -- that is -- who are you?

(CUT TO MCU UNCLE ALBERT.)

UNCLE ALBERT: I'm glad you asked me that.

(ZOOM OUT TO TWOSHOT UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE. UNCLE ALBERT grabs MUNDANE's hand and begins pumping it enthusiastically.)

UNCLE ALBERT: I'm Uncle Albert, the renowned fan expert. And you must be Mundane.

MUNDANE: Yes - -

UNCLE ALBERT: I thought as much. You look mundane. I heard you needed an expert on fannish idiosyncracies. Well, I'm your man.

MUNDANE: (finally disengaging himself from UNCLE ALBERT's handshake) Oh, that's just wonderful. All right, come with me.

(CUT TO MLS including MAID as MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT start to leave. MUNDANE calls over his shoulder to MAID.)

MUNDANE: You, too.

MAID: Oh, no. Not me. I'm not going back there. It's room 770. You can find it by yourself.

MUNDANE: Oh, all right. But stick around. I'll probably want to talk to you later.

UNCLE ALBERT: Say, I really like your shoes.

MUNDANE: What shoes? I mean, uh, thick feet. Oh, hell! Come on!

(UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE exit. Hold MLS of MAID.)

MAID: (calling after them) I get off at four. After that I'm not available. And I'm not going to clean up the mess in that bathtub!

(CUT TO MLS hotel hallway outside of function room. UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE enter at end of hall. There is the sound of a commotion coming from the function room. MUNDANE stops UNCLE ALBERT as he pauses to look into room. CUT TO MLS COSMOS and CHAOS juggling torches on stage. CUT TO TWOSHOT MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT looking in through doorway.)

MUNDANE: What the hell is going on here?

UNCLE ALBERT: It's just part of the con's programming. Come on, we have to get to room 770.

MUNDANE: but they're playing with real torches! Fire!

UNCLE ALBERT: It's all right, believe me. They've rehearsed this act -- once. They know what they're doing.

(CUT TO MLS COSMOS and CHAOS. COSMOS drops a torch. CUT TO TWOSHOT MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT.)

MUNDANE: Wait a minute! Look at that! He dropped one!

(MUNDANE attempts to enter room but UNCLE ALBERT holds him back.)

UNCLE ALBERT: It's all right. Really.

MUNDANE: But it's not all right! They've set the stage on fire!

(COSMOS rushed into shot.)

COSMOS: Hey, do either of you know where I might find a fire extinguisher?

UNCLE ALBERT: Yeah, I think I saw one back that way, towards the lobby.

COSMOS: Thanks.

(COSMOS rushes out through doorway. ZOOM IN to tight TWOSHOT MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT.)

MUNDANE: Look, it is not all right! The place is going up in flames!

UNCLE ALBERT: No, look, they're getting it under control. See, all of the fen in the front row are rushing to the stage to pour their drinks on the fire. ~~Look~~, there's Bowers pouring his coke on Chaos.

(There is a muffled "whump" as MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT are illuminated in a sudden bright, fiery glow.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Oops. That is, there's Bowers pouring his rum and coke on Chaos.

MUNDANE: We've got to call the fire department! An ambulance!

UNCLE ALBERT: Really, it's all right. His wife is a doctor. She'll take good care of him. And see, the fire's almost out. Come on, we have more important things to attend to.

MUNDANE: More important?:

UNCLE ALBERT: Remember the body in the bathtub? We must establish our priorities. What's more important? A smoking juggler or a bizarre homicide? Besides, there's only one Chaos. How many bathtubs are there in this hotel? And how many women waiting to be victimized, to have their clothes ripped off and their bodies smeared with green slime? Quite a number, I'd be willing to wager, depending on who was doing the ripping and smearing.

MUNDANE: But, but - -

UNCLE ALBERT: (grabbing MUNDANE by the arm and leading him away) I knew you'd see it my way.

(CUT TO room number 770 plaque on door. ZOOM OUT to establish that door is open and our view is from inside of bathroom. UNCLE ALBERT enters.)

UNCLE ALBERT: (glancing at number on door) Well, this is it. Room 770.

(UNCLE ALBERT walks off camera, into the room. MUNDANE enters and stops by door.)

MUNDANE: (gesturing toward camera) And this is the bathroom.

UNCLE ALBERT: Of course. So it is.

(They enter bathroom.)

UNCLE ALBERT: And this must be - -

MUNDANE: (That's|the sink.

UNCLE ALBERT: Right again. Then this must be the tub.

(CUT TO widest possible shot from inside the tub. UNCLE ALBERT draws open the shower curtain and peers inside.)

UNCLE ALBERT: (triumphantly) Aha!

(CUT TO camera angle from outside tub. Try to include UNCLE ALBERT, MUNDANE and tub in single shot, if possible.)

MUNDANE: What the hell. There's no body here.

UNCLE ALBERT: (kneeling by tub) Maybe not. But there is a lot of green stuff in the tub.

(UNCLE ALBERT sticks a finger into the green stuff, then tastes it.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Aha again! It's just as I suspected!

(UNCLE ALBERT scoops up a handful of the stuff and thrusts it under MUNDANE's nose. MUNDANE backs off.)

UNCLE ALBERT: It's lime Jell-o! That can only mean one thing! This is Joe Haldeman's room!

MUNDANE: What? ~~Exactly~~ how the hell do you know that?

UNCLE ALBERT: Boy, you really are mundane, aren't you?

MUNDANE: Of course I'm Mundane. I already told you that. But what happened to the body?

UNCLE ALBERT: I don't know. I guess it's not here anymore.

MUNDANE: I can see that, you bozo. I don't need you to tell me that. What I want to know is where it is. Do you think this Bob Haldeman might have done something with it? *HALDEMAN!*

UNCLE ALBERT: That's Joe Haldeman and, yes, it's quite possible that he did something with it. However, wherever the body is now, I don't think Joe has it.

MUNDANE: Oh? And how do you figure that?

UNCLE ALBERT: Oh, Gay would never let him keep it.

MUNDANE: Okay, so where is it?

UNCLE ALBERT: Well, Mr. Mundane, that's a very good question, I'm sure.

(UNCLE ALBERT pulls a copy of the script out of his pocket and leafs through it.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Unfortunately -- I don't seem to have a very good answer. Certainly not on page 7, where we are now. But I can tell you one thing.

MUNDANE: And that is?

UNCLE ALBERT: This is obviously the work of --  
(pause for emphasis and dramatic closeup)  
-- faans!

(CUT TO MLS of fen sitting around a table in a bedroom. Someone is shuffling a deck of cards. MIKE is dividing his attention between the poker game and a game of backgammon he is playing with an attractive femmefan. FADE UP theme music, softly. ROGER begins to deal out the cards.)

ROGER : Okay, this is Diablo. Five card draw, deuces loose. Max draw two. Ante a dollar. Opener has to win or match the pot.

(ROGER finishes dealing.)

ROGER: Everybody in? Mike, are you in? Mike?

MIKE: Huh? What's the game?

ROGER: Diablo, for a buck. Are you in?

MIKE: Oh. Of course. Sorry.

ROGER: Okay, Bill. The first option's to you.

BILL: Hmmm. Let me see. Do I want to open or not.

SID: Any time this week would be all right with us, Cavin.

BILL: Don't rush me. I have to think about it. Let me see. If I keep this and throw that away -- No, maybe I should keep this instead - -

ROGER: Oh, come on. In or out?

BILL: Well, I guess I'll just check.

ROGER: Thank you. Sid? How about you?

SID: I think I'll check, too.

ROGER: Checked to you, Josh.

JOSH: I'll check.

ROGER: Checked to you, Mike. Mike? Mike? Will you open?

(CUT TO CU MIKE.)

MIKE: Oh, I'm sorry. I haven't seen my cards yet. Just a second while I pick them up.

(ZOOM OUT to MS as MIKE picks up cards, along with a foot that is lying on the table.)

MIKE: Why, this isn't a hand at all!

(Theme music builds to a crescendo as CUT TO MLS of table. Everyone is talking at once as MIKE tries to discern what the foot is attached to. OPB drifts across foreground. FADE OUT scene and theme music.)

(FADE IN LS hotel hallway. Woman is approaching camera, carrying ice bucket. FADE UP theme music, softly at first, but building to peak by end of scene. PAN to follow as woman rounds corner and stops at ice machine. She begins to fill bucket with ice. OPB rises into shot at bottom of picture. Woman looks up and sees OPB, freezes for a moment. Quick ZOOM IN to CU of woman as she screams. Cut to MCU of ice bucket dropping into machine. Quick FADE OUT.

(CUT TO darkened interior of ice machine, looking toward door. Door opens and UNCLE ALBERT peers inside.)

UNCLE ALBERT: How curiously unfannish.

(CUT TO TWOSHOT of UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE by ice machine. UNCLE ALBERT reaches inside and retrieves ice bucket.)

MUNDANE: Unfannish? How so?

UNCLE ALBERT: There's ice in this ice machine. A lot of it. It doesn't make any sense.

MUNDANE: None of this makes any sense. Look, somebody said they heard a scream coming from around here somewhere. So who screamed? And where are they now?

UNCLE ALBERT: (popping an ice cube into his mouth) Loo, i you gunna ge aw es-side evey ti summany repors a lou noive -- ptui!

(UNCLE ALBERT spits out ice cube.)

UNCLE ALBERT: - - you're just not going to last through the rest of this weekend.

MUNDANE: But somebody screamed, you idiot! In my hotel! And you still haven't explained about the lime Jell-o in the bathtub, or the woman the maid said she saw in the Jell-o.

UNCLE ALBERT: Well, it all started back in 1926, when Hugo Gernsback published the first issue of a magazine called Amazing - -

MUNDANE: But what does that have to do with female bodies in bathtubs filled with lime Jell-o?

UNCLE ALBERT: I'm getting to that. Give me a couple of hours - -

MUNDANE: A couple of - - Look, we may not have that much time. The perpetrator, or perpetrators, of these bizarre incidents may strike again/ at any moment. You said earlier that you knew who was responsible.

UNCLE ALBERT: Yeah. Faans.

MUNDANE: Right. So who, or what, is this -- faans?

UNCLE ALBERT: I'm glad you asked me that. I suppose you've heard of Jaws?



MUNDANE: You mean a shark is responsible for all this?

UNCLE ALBERT: No. I was just wondering if you'd heard of it. Just trying to make small talk. I liked the scene where the shark jumped into the boat and - -

MUNDANE: I don't believe this. We've got a mystery on our hands. One, maybe two people have disappeared, and you're talking about movies!

(CUT TO LS of hall. MIKE is running toward camera, calling for UNCLE ALBERT. PAN to follow as MIKE rounds corner and comes to a halt in front of MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT.)

MIKE: Uncle Albert, am I glad I ran into you! The damndest thing just happened to me. I was in my room - - (noticing MUNDANE) Who's this?

UNCLE ALBERT: He's Mundane.

MIKE: I would have guessed that, but who is he?

UNCLE ALBERT: The otel-hay etective-day.

MIKE: Uh, yeah. Right. Anyway, so I was in my room, conducting my usual seminar - -

UNCLE ALBERT: You mean the Joseph R. Haldeman Memorial Seminar on the Redistribution of Economic Resources Through the Use of Statistics and Psychology?

MIKE: Right. A friendly game. So anyway, there I was in my room, when I started hearing this funny music. I didn't pay much attention to it, until I went to pick up my cards and found myself holding this woman's foot.

UNCLE ALBERT: And then something unusual happened?

MIKE: Boy, did it! Everybody started acting confused while this music gets louder. Then, all of a sudden, the music stopped and everything went dark. Next thing I know, I'm running up to you and this mundane person to tell you all about it.

UNCLE ALBERT: Why, you fool. You've just been on videotape. That noise was the background music. When it got dark all of a sudden, that was the fade out at the end of the scene. You weren't supposed to notice that!

MIKE: Oh. Well, thanks, you snotty little twit. For a moment there, I was a little concerned.

(MIKE exits. CUT TO CU of MUNDANE.)

MUNDANE: But what about the foot?!

(CUT to TWOSHOT of MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT.)

UNCLE ALBERT: What foot?

MUNDANE: The woman's foot! He said he went to pick up his cards and found himself holding a foot!

UNCLE ALBERT: Oh, that's just an old card players' joke.

MUNDANE: But he said it was a woman's foot! <sup>✓</sup> What did he do with the woman?

UNCLE ALBERT: Really, you just don't go around asking people things like that. If Mike had thought it was any of our business what he did with a woman's foot, I'm sure he would have told us. You really are Mundane, aren't you?

MUNDANE: Of course I'm Mundane! Why does everyone keep asking me about my name? This whole thing gets crazier by the minute! You're supposed to be the expert -- what do we do now?

(ZOOM IN on UNCLE ALBERT.)

UNCLE ALBERT: I'm glad you asked me that. You see, I have a plan.

(CUT TO TWOSHOT of FAN 1 and FAN 2 sitting at a bar, facing camera. Bartender enters and puts a drink down in front of FAN 2, then exits.)

FAN 1: What's this stuff?

FAN 2: I dunno. Some kind of drink. I think it's supposed to be fannish.

FAN 1: You gonna try it?

FAN 2: Nooo. Why don't you try it first?

FAN 1: I'm not gonna try it. It was set down in front of you. You drink it.

FAN 2: No, I think I'll pass.

FAN 1: Well, somebody's gotta try it.

FAN 2: Say, I've got an idea. Why not let Mikey try it?

FAN 1: Sure! Mikey will drink anything!

FAN 2: And if he survives it, maybe I'll try one. Hey, Mikey!

(PAN to follow drink as they slide it down to MIKEY, who is sitting nearby enjoying a very large drink. MIKEY picks up drink, sniffs at it cautiously, then takes a sip. His eyes widen and he smiles broadly, then chugs the drink. PAN to TWOSHOT of FAN 1 and FAN 2.)

*FAN 1: He likes it! Mikey likes it!*

FAN 2: Bartender! Two more spayed gerbils! *N/C Fizz*

CUT TO slow PAN of crowd in bar. FADE UP theme music. We spot a beanie in the crowd. Someone screams, then giggles. ZOOM IN to reveal that it is not OPB, but a plastic beanie worn by some innocent neo. CUT TO MLS of the bar as music reaches a peak. OPB glides along behind bar, approaching bartender. Bartender falls behind bar. Quick FADE OUT.)

(FADE IN low angle LS of balcony. CUT TO THREESHOT of UNCLE ALBERT, MUNDANE and TOM on balcony. UNCLE ALBERT is busily tying one end of a rope to the railing. The other end of the rope is tied around one of TOM's ankles.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Mind you, it's only a hunch, but I think I know what our villain is after.

MUNDANE: And that is?

UNCLE ALBERT: Notoriety. He's trying to catch people in compromising situations. And not just any people, but people who are well known to the fannish community.

MUNDANE: How do you figure that?

UNCLE ALBERT: Well, I can't be certain until we find out what really happened back at the ice machine, but the first incident took place in Joe Haldeman's room. Then there was the funny business at the poker -- that is -- seminar in Mike's room. I can only assume that our culprit is after attention and, probably, egoboo. What better bait, I asked myself - -

MUNDANE: You do that often?

UNCLE ALBERT: What?

MUNDANE: Talk to yourself.

UNCLE ALBERT: Oh, sure. Probably most of the time. Anyway, what better bait, I asked myself, than a BNF?

MUNDANE: A what?

UNCLE ALBERT: A BNF. That's a big name fan. Well, as it turned out, all the BNF's were off at a closed party somewhere, and I couldn't get anybody to tell me what the room number was, so this is the best I could do.

MUNDANE: And what, might I ask, is this?

UNCLE ALBERT: This is a BF. A big fan. Tom here is a member of Big Fandom. To be a Big Fan, you have to be over six foot tall and/or weigh over two hundred pounds. Show him the handgrip, Tom.

(TOM demonstrates the secret handgrip of Big Fandom on MUNDANE.)

TOM: Say, those are some shoes you've got there. Thick feet?

MUNDANE: What the hell was that all about?

UNCLE ALBERT: That was the secret handgrip of Big Fandom. Not to be confused with the secret fangrip of handom. So anyway, Tom is going to be our bait. You see, one end of this rope is firmly attached to this railing.

MUNDANE: (beginning to realize what UNCLE ALBERT is up to) No - -

UNCLE ALBERT: The other end is tied around Tom's ankle.

(INSERT CU of rope around TOM's ankle. END INSERT.)

MUNDANE: No. You wouldn't dare - -

UNCLE ALBERT: Are you ready, Tom?

TOM: Whenever you are, Uncle Albert.

(TOM steps over railing.)

MUNDANE: Oh, Jesus. You can't be serious - -

(CUT TO side view MS of UNCLE ALBERT pushing TOM off balcony.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Here we go!

MUNDANE: NO!!!

(Quick CUT TO TOM falling through air, CUT TO MCU rope being pulled taut against railing. CUT TO TWOSHOT of UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE looking over balcony.)

MUNDANE: (quietly, as a man who has resigned himself to his fate) You really are crazy, aren't you? What, exactly, do you think you're doing?

UNCLE ALBERT: I've just tossed out the bait. (calling to TCI.) Are you all right, Tom?

CUT TO MCU of TOM hanging upside down.)

TOM: So far, so good.

(CUT TO TWOSHOT of UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE.)

MUNDANE: I don't believe any of this. Now what are you going to do?

UNCLE ALBERT: Now, we wait.

(Slow ZOOM IN to MCU of UNCLE ALBERT as he begins to sing.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Well, come on all of you big strong fen  
Uncle Albert needs your help again  
He's got himself in a terrible bind  
Trying to get his fanzine out on time  
He's got a Bathurst cover and a Warner loc  
But his typer's been put in hock

(CUT TO MS as FANNISH CHORUS LINE dances out to surround UNCLE ALBERT, pushing MUNDANE to the rear of the balcony.)

UNCLE ALBERT & CHORUS: And it's one, two, three, what're we pubbin' for  
Don't ask me I don't care at all  
The next ish was due last fall  
And it's five, six, seven, so who cares if it's late  
Well, this fanac's somethin' I could learn to hate  
Whoopee! Gonna gafiate.

(FADE UP theme music as CUT TO MCU of rope being tugged against railing. CUT TO MS of balcony. UNCLE ALBERT and CHORUS are looking over railing. MUNDANE is unable to push his way through to see what is happening.)

MUNDANE: What's happening? I can't see anything!

UNCLE ALBERT: I think we've got a nibble.

MUNDANE: What?! Get out of the way! Let me through!

(Bodies push closer together, keeping MUNDANE from railing.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Yes, we've definitely got something here. Hang in there, Tom!

MUNDANE: What is it? What's going on?

UNCLE ALBERT: Tom?

TOM: (off camera) Aaarrrrgh!!!

(CUT TO MCU of rope against railing as it jerks violently several times, then goes slack. Theme music stops abruptly. CUT TO MS of balcony. CHORUS members are slowly walking away, shaking their heads sadly.)

UNCLE ALBERT: Cops.

(ZOOM IN to TWOSHOT of UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE as UNCLE ALBERT reels in the rope and looks at the severed end.)

MUNDANE: You idiot! What have you done?

UNCLE ALBERT: I think we've lost our bait.

MUNDANE: Lost our bait?! You maniac! You blundering fool!

UNCLE ALBERT: Take it easy. We can get more. Maybe that closed party's over with now - -

MUNDANE: No no, no, no, no! You cretin! You lunatic! No more bait! Don't you understand what you've just done? That was a human being you just tossed over that railing -- (peering over railing) -- I think.

UNCLE ALBERT: Tom's a big boy. He can take care of himself.

MUNDANE: But that's just it! He can't! It just took care of him! He's gone!

UNCLE ALBERT: Maybe he found the closed party - -

MUNDANE: Enough! I can't take any more. What the hell is going on here?!?!

UNCLE ALBERT: Where?

MUNDANE: Here, you fool! Here in my hotel! What happened to the body in the bathtub? Who screamed by the ice machine? What did that hairy guy do with the woman's foot?

UNCLE ALBERT: I told you - -

MUNDANE: Yes, I know! I really am Mundane! Why do you keep telling me my name? What happened to the big guy you threw off the balcony? What's going on here?

UNCLE ALBERT: Boy, are you a spoilsport. If I answered all those questions now, there wouldn't be any mystery. Can't you wait 'til the end of the tape?

MUNDANE: And when, exactly, is that going to be?

UNCLE ALBERT: Real soon now.

(FADE UP theme music. CUT TO LS of Hucksters Room. OPB drifts across bottom of picture. CUT TO MLS view down hall with stairs to one side. UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE are walking toward camera. Just as they're about to turn to go up the stairs, UNCLE ALBERT wheels MUNDANE around in the direction they just came from, just in time to keep MUNDANE from seeing a scantily clad ~~\*\*\*\*~~ femmefan, partially covered with whipped cream, dashing down the stairs, pursued by a fan carrying an aerosol can. OPB drifts across bottom of picture.

(CUT TO MLS of hotel hallway. MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT approaching. In the foreground is a hall party. Fen are sitting on floor, passing around a bottle of booze. Some have their hands in the air. MUNDANE stops near door to room, looking around in alarm and disgust. FADE OUT theme music.)

MUNDANE: What the hell is going on here?

UNCLE ALBERT: Now, take it easy. It's just a little party.

MUNDANE: A little party?! They're all over the hall! And look at this room! It's wall to wall people in there!

UNCLE ALBERT: Obviously, that's why some of them are out in the hall. Let's face it, Mr. Mundane. The rooms in your hotel are just too small. You're just lucky that everyone's in too good a mood to complain about it.

MUNDANE: But this is insane!

(CUT TO MLS from inside of room, shooting over people's heads to see MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT framed in doorway.)

MUNDANE: All right, who's in charge here? Who's room is this?

(CUT TO MS of MUNDANE and UNCLE ALBERT in hall. CAP'N RO comes to the door.)

CAP'N RO: Yes? Can I help you?

MUNDANE: Is this your room?

CAP'N RO: Yes, it is.

MUNDANE: Don't you know that this room is only registered for two people to be sleeping in?

CAP'N RO: Really? Well, I'll tell you what. If two people go to sleep, we'll ask everyone else to leave.

MUNDANE: Now, wait just one minute!

UNCLE ALBERT: Come on. Let's get out of here.

MUNDANE: But the fire marshall - -

UNCLE ALBERT: Yes, he seems to be having a good time. Isn't that him, over by the window, pouring a beer on that smoking femmefan?

MUNDANE: What? Where?

UNCLE ALBERT: (taking MUNDANE by the arm and dragging him away) Come on. Remember what we're here for? Lime Jell-o? Disappearing bodies?

(UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE walk toward camera and out of shot. Fen sitting in hall all say "Smooth!" FADE UP theme music.)

(CUT TO LS of various con activities. In each shot, OPB drifts across bottom of picture.)

(CUT TO MS looking into pool. OPB glides by, towing a beer keg. FADE OUT scene and theme music. FADE IN LS of hotel lobby. There is a crowd, checking out at desk, cuddling, saying goodbye to one another, etc. CUT TO MLS of UNCLE ALBERT and MUNDANE standing at edge of crowd.)

MUNDANE: So you said you'd clear up the mystery for me at checkout time. Well, it's checkout time. Clear it up.

UNCLE ALBERT: Sshh. Watch. Listen.

(CUT TO MS of SANDY and JOE FANN standing in line.)

SANDY: So there I was, waiting in the bathtub. I couldn't wait to see the expression on Joe's face when he found me there.

JOE FANN: So, what happened?

SANDY: Well, it was a long wait. I guess I must have dozed off. Next thing I knew, this maid was running out of the room, screaming. Anyway, after that I just got tired of waiting, so I went back to my room to take a shower - -

(PAN TO FEMMEFAN and friends, also standing in line.)

FEMMEFAN: - - almost gave me a heart attack. I mean, there I was, filling up my ice bucket, when this guy creeps up behind me. For a moment, I could have sworn he looked just like Claude Degler. I guess I must have freaked out a little - -

(PAN to TOE and friends.)